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THE

CHILTERN HUNDREDS

BY

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Illustrated by the Author

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PREFACE.

The intention of this little book is to add, though ever so slightly, to the efforts which are made for the better appreciation of the archæological and historical interests of our Island. Perchance its publication may induce some of the crowd who throughout the summer float idly down the reaches of the Thames, or moor their house-boats at its margin, occasionally to leave the banks of the river and not to leave unvisited some of the most beautiful and interesting parts of the County of Buckingham. Residents also may perhaps not take it amiss that they should have the stories connected with their homes retold to them. An exploration of the Chiltern Hundreds by those to

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whom they are hitherto unknown will henceforth make the name convey to them something more than that of an obsolete office, and if they choose to carry on their explorations in our company we shall be both pleased and flattered.

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THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Position of the Chiltern Hundreds—Diversity of Natural Features —Nomenclature—Geological Aspect—Early Inhabitants—Historical Reminiscences—The Stewardship of the Chilterns—Its History and its present Condition.

The County of Buckingham is a long wedge-shaped portion of our Island, which extends from Northamptonshire and the Ouse in the north to the Thames and Berkshire in the south, and it has the apex of the triangle which it forms at its extreme southern point on the banks of the last-named river opposite to Staines. If from this larger triangle we cut off a smaller one by drawing a line from a point about ten miles north of the Thames on the Oxfordshire border to a point on the Hertfordshire border near Great Berkhampstead, we shall find that we have severed from the remainder of the county three of those ancient divi-

sions, now so little heard of, called Hundreds. These three Hundreds are those of Desborough, Burnham, and Stoke, and they are bounded on the south-western side by the Thames, and on the east by the Coln, while their northern boundary is the base line which we have drawn across the central portion of the Chiltern Hills nearly at their highest point. These three divisions usually go by the name of the Chiltern Hundreds, and they form the most beautiful and interesting portion of the not unpicturesque nor uninteresting county of Buckingham.

We probably only associate the name of the Chilterns with high chalk-downs, and deep coombes dotted with ancient box-trees; with smiling valleys whose sides are clothed with beech-woods, and with breezy uplands, from which we look down on the rich plains of the Thames and the Coln. But the Chilterns give a name also to other portions of the fair county of Buckingham besides those parts which are actually covered by the rolling downs themselves, for the three Hundreds with which we are concerned spread not only over the hills after which they are called, but over the low-lying plains at their feet as well.

It will consequently be seen that these Hundreds embrace many different forms of natural scenery, and differ also in their aspects of his-

torical interest; for as we pass from hill to dale, from upland ridge to broad flowing river, we shall mark many a spot which owes what it possesses of fame or notoriety directly or indirectly to its natural features. Sometimes, however, this idea has been carried too far; as by those who would derive the name not only of the county, but of the county town itself, from the trees which grow on the southern hills. But to affirm that buchen or beech-trees have supplied the first part of the name of Buckingham is a statement a little too fanciful for acceptance, since *shires* take their names from their towns, and not the towns from the shires; and Buckingham is situated a good deal too far away from the Chilterns to claim any connection with their beech-woods. No; we must connect the first syllable probably with the word book, and say that the little town on the Ouse to the north of the county is described as the Book-ing-ham, or the Home in the Book or Charter meadow.

While we are on the subject of names let us turn for a moment to that of the hills themselves. Chiltern is a difficult word to identify in its present form, so let us content ourselves with accepting the theory of the Father of English antiquarians, William Camden, that it is akin to a British word *cylt* or *chilt*, which

signifies chalk. And we ought to say something about the chalk itself, as it forms the chief natural feature in the Chilterns. In geological terms the lowest bed, that is in order of formation, though not in position, is chalk marl, which has a thickness of about eighty feet, and on the top of which is the formation known as Totternhoe Stone, a brownish sandy stone with dark grains. The formation above this, which is called lower chalk, is a bed about four hundred feet thick. It is without flints, and contains fossils known as whorls and spirals. The upper portion of it is called chalk rock, and is so hard that the well-sinkers have to blast it as they make their way down. Next comes the upper chalk with flints, a bed three hundred feet in thickness, and containing fossil sea-urchins and sponges. The making of lime out of the chalk forms a staple industry of the Chilterns. The highest point of the hills is to be found just outside the boundary of our Hundreds at Wendover, and there they attain a height of nine hundred feet.

The line of the Chilterns rises steeply from the great Oolite plain which stretches away beneath them towards the north-west. Here it is therefore that we find the deep coombes which form so distinguishing a feature of chalk countries. These coombes are many of them

thickly clothed on their sides with curious old gnarled box-trees, and where they open out into the plain stand picturesque villages and hamlets, with a little church perhaps perched in some conspicuous position on an outlying spur.

> "Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,
> Diversified with trees of every growth,
> Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks
> Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine
> Within the twilight of their distant shades."

We have therefore in the Chiltern Hundreds three distinct sorts of natural scenery—that of the plain; that of the cliff-like slopes clothed with foliage, and in places, as at Clifden, running sheer down to the very edge of the water; and that of the lofty rolling downs above, stretching away, line behind line, like gigantic green and white billows petrified into rest.

We must return to what we were saying about natural features making history. That is certainly the case with the earliest historical traces which we find in the Chiltern Hundreds. To early inhabitants of the uplands we owe the barrows and camps which crown so many of the heights, as at Kimble, where is the traditional stronghold of

> "The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,"

from whose castle the villages beneath the

downs here take their name. On the hills, moreover, other members of the British tribe of the Catieuchlani have perhaps left their mark in the great "white leaf cross" which shines out so brightly in the chalk above the little town of Prince's Risborough; and of British origin in all probability is the ancient Ickneild way which winds along the edge of the plain beneath the northern slope of the hills. And if early inhabitants loved to make their fortresses on the bleak downs, those of later date preferred to settle in other parts of our district, and construct their camps by the side of the Thames as at States and Danesfield.

But before the Danes chose, according to their wont, some spot where the water-way was ready for their boats, the Saxons had peopled all the slopes of the hills, for "hams" and "tons" and "stokes" lie thick together at the openings of the coombes, or in the broader valleys of the Chess, the Misbourn, and the Wyck. In time great territorial lords built their mansions not only by the banks of the Coln and the Thames, but high up on the hills themselves, as at Chequers and Hampden, but there are no mediæval castles. The feudal barons do not appear to have erected strongholds on the Chilterns from which they might make war on one another, or even hold out

against the royal forces, as they did elsewhere. Kingly Windsor was perhaps too near to them.

And now we propose to explore each nook and corner of the Chiltern Hundreds, to climb the chalk downs, and walk through the valleys which, beech-bordered, run up into the hills; to traverse the plains through which run the Thames and the Coln; to visit church and mansion; and to find our way into many a well-wooded park, and by the banks of many a clear chalk trout-stream, flowing through sequestered dell. Nor shall we only look for the beauties of natural scenery. We shall attempt to gather up historical recollections and scenes of bygone days. We shall visit Eton, which surely has as much right to be called "royal" as Windsor itself. Chalfont and Horton will bring to us memories of Milton. We shall pass into the churchyard at Stoke Pogis, immortalized by Gray. Hughenden manor and church will speak to us of the life and death of a statesman of modern days, Benjamin, first and last Earl of Beaconsfield.

There is one way in which the name of the Chiltern Hundreds brings before us simply a political matter, or rather a legal fiction, connected with the House of Commons. To accept the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hun-

dreds is, as everyone knows, tantamount to the vacation of a seat in Parliament; but it may be interesting to examine a little into the two facts of, first, what the office really is, and secondly, why its acceptance brings about the result which it assuredly does.

To begin with, what do we mean by a Hundred? In Saxon times the administrative unit in the country was the township called in Norman times a manor. These manors or townships were formed into Hundreds for purposes of judicial administration and defence, and many of them which had been the property of Saxon kings became the property of Norman sovereigns. They were managed by bailiffs or stewards, who held a position of imparted dignity. These officers accounted for the revenues of the bailiwicks, and collected tallages and aids and such-like feudal dues, and they usually farmed their offices for a sum paid down in the manner of the publicans of old. In time, however, the stewards lost some of their powers and rights, which were first interfered with by the justices on circuit, and were in reality curtailed by the appointment of surveyors-general in the time of Henry VIII. But it was not till the time of Charles II. that the duties of stewards of Hundreds ceased altogether, for when that king sur-

rendered royal feudal dues for a fixed sum, the royal manors were leased with all their rights.

From the earliest Norman times the Chiltern Hundreds had been in the hands of the king. The manors were sold under the Commonwealth but reverted to the Crown, and in 1679 were leased to Thomas D'Oyley, who may be said to have been the last acting steward. In after time the rents were sold as fee-farm rents, and the powers, duties, and courts of the steward came to an end.

We now come to the history of the stewardship as a sinecure office. It is in this aspect an adaptation of the Place Act of 1708, but that Act was not made use of in this way until the middle of the eighteenth century. Its original intention was to prevent the formation of a court party, pledged by fruits of office, in the House of Commons itself; inasmuch as it required that all members who are appointed to any place of honour and profit under the Crown should by their acceptance of such office vacate their seats. In no other way can a representative get rid of the duties which his constituents have placed upon him. The Place Act was, it seems, first used for the convenience of a member in this way in 1750, when Mr. John Pitt was appointed to the stewardship of

the Chiltern Hundreds for the purpose of vacating his seat, as he wished to seek election for a constituency other than that which he represented. Other stewardships of manors are also made use of in the same way, and when two members wish at the same time to vacate their seats, one of them is usually appointed to the stewardship of Norstead. In the Dublin Parliament certain Escheatorships were used in the same manner. The appointment of the stewardship rests with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it is a piece of patronage which it is anything but an advantage to possess, for on that Minister rests the responsibility of seeing that the acceptance of the office is not used for any improper purpose, and that the member who seeks it does not wish to resign his seat for any dishonourable or unworthy reason. The actual signing of the warrant at once strikes the member's name from the list of the House of Commons, and the document when sent to him does not contain the letters M.P. in the address.

But it is said that the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds is doomed. A select committee of the House of Commons has been busied with the question of the resignation of seats by members, and their report has been embodied in a Blue Book. The history of the

subject has been gone into thoroughly by the gentlemen who served on the said committee, and that history is interesting enough. But if we look at the result of their deliberations it is evident that, although they have not altogether arrived at their final determination, it will sooner or later be decreed that the office shall no longer exist. Should this take place, a legal fiction, it is true, will be swept away, but with it will disappear an interesting page from the constitution of the country. Parliamentary laws and histories have not always been made, sometimes they have grown, or, we may say, have developed themselves. We have attempted to show how the present use of the office of the steward partly owes its existence to law and partly to custom.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE BANKS OF THE THAMES.

Fawley Court and Church—Bulstrode Whitlock—Greenlands—The Siege—Yewden—Hambleden Church—St. Thomas de Cantelupe, Sir Cope D'Oyley, Scrope, and Sheepwash—The Manor House and Charles I.—Fingest—The Ghost of Bishop de Burgwash and the Village Common—Thomas Delafield, the Antiquary—Turville Park and General Dumoriez—Medmenham Abbey—Cistercians and Franciscans—Remains of the Mansion of the Dutfields and of the Abbey—Medmenham Village—The Lodge and the Church—Danesfield—The Camp—Pugin's Chapel—States—Hurleyford House—Sir Robert Clayton—Court Garden—Dr. Batty—Great Marlow—The Church—Thomas Langley and Frank Smedley—The Old Parsonage—Marlow Place—Remnantz—The Croft—Percy Bysshe Shelley—The Grammar School—G. P. R. James—Little Marlow Abbey and Church—The Despencers.

The banks of the Thames in that most beautiful part of its course between Henley and Maidenhead have been described many times, but we must take a boat and once more coast along the edge of the lovely hills which run down to its waters, and from time to time make our way inland if we are to visit the westernmost of the Chiltern Hundreds—that of Desborough.

But we are going to begin with what we see from the river itself. We shall start from

Henley Bridge, and, making our way down the Regatta course, so well known to all Thames oarsmen, we soon arrive at the borders of Buckinghamshire and Fawley Court. Down to the river itself runs the beautiful park, and in the park stands the mansion which was built in 1684, from designs by Sir Christopher Wren. There was an older house which was once the residence of a distinguished man who played a conspicuous part in the days of the Civil Wars and of the Commonwealth—Bulstrode Whitlock. This statesman of those stormy days was the son of Sir James Whitlock, a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and the father died here in 1632. Ten years afterwards the house was sacked by the Royalists under Sir John Byron, an officer famed for his cavalry raids, in which he was not, however, always successful. It is said that the troopers destroyed the books and papers found in Whitlock's library, carrying some away, and using others for pipelights. The house was wrecked to such an extent that the family removed to Chilton, in Wiltshire.

We shall pass out of the park and into the village, and visit the church which stands some two miles from the river. There is carving about the altar and on the pulpit, by Grinling Gibbons, and in the south chapel we see the

effigies of the father and mother of Bulstrode Whitlock. The lady was the daughter of Edward Bulstrode, of Bulstrode, a place to which we shall come later on. Her son outlived the Commonwealth and died in 1676. He refused to take part in the proceedings connected with the trial of the King, and assisted as commissioner in the negotiations which so often took place between Charles and his Parliament at Oxford, Uxbridge, and elsewhere. He was in consequence allowed to live out his days in peace and retirement after the Restoration. It should, moreover, be remembered that he was not only a statesman at home, but also represented England when important matters were transacted at Stockholm in 1653. Altogether, he was one of the most able as well as moderate councillors of Cromwell, and the latter would have done well at times to follow his advice instead of going his own way.

A little beyond Fawley Court we come to The Island, the starting point of the races which are rowed from hence to a point a little below Henley Bridge. But we are concerned rather with what we can see on the banks than with memories of hard-fought struggles on the river itself, so we row on towards Hambleden Lock. On our way we shall pass Greenlands, lately the residence of of Mr. W. H. Smith, the

statesman, who died in 1893. The present mansion occupies the site of—and is partly formed out of—an older house which was besieged by the Parliamentarians in 1644. The Royalists had taken up a position here with the idea of commanding the river and opposing the passage of boats from the west towards London. The besiegers battered the house with cannon which they planted on the other side of the river, and reduced it to a heap of ruins. Hawkins, the governor, who held it for Sir John D'Oyley, was forced to capitulate after a siege which lasted for some months, but was allowed to make honourable terms. Sir John D'Oyley sold Greenlands to Bulstrode Whitlock. Many marks of the attack in the shape of cannon balls have been dug up from time to time, and remains of fortifications may still be traced. We shall note the large cedars of Lebanon which form such an attractive feature in the grounds. Greenlands, together with Yewden, which we shall come to a little farther on, once formed a separate manor in Hambleden, which is a parish of large extent.

When we reach the lock, we land and turn up the road which leads northwards. We soon pass Yewden. The house is ancient, but has been much altered. About a mile farther up the side-valley which we have now entered,

we find the village and church of Hambleden. Few spots in the Chiltern Hundreds can compete in quiet beauty with this place. The red-tiled houses are grouped around the ancient and interesting church, and are backed by fine trees. Through rich meadows flows a little stream, and on each side we have the wood-clothed hills.

The church is one of those flint-built structures of which we shall find so many examples about the Chilterns. It is a building of various dates, and cruciform. We enter it by a rather remarkable wooden porch on the south side. Within, the church has been a good deal altered and restored, but we note the Norman font, in which, probably, was baptized, in the year 1218, Thomas de Cantelupe, a native of the place. Bishop Thomas, or Saint Thomas as he became, was the friend of Simon de Montford, and the supporter of the popular cause in the struggle between King Henry III. and his Barons. In the reign of Edward I. he was known as a statesman and administrator, as well as an able prelate and theologian. In 1320 he was canonized by Pope John XXII., and was the last English saint thus duly accepted. We shall find several monuments worth notice. In the north transept is a very fine one representing Sir Cope D'Oyley, his

wife, and their ten children, all the figures kneeling upright on a slab. Sir Cope was a Justice of *Oyer and Terminer,* and was the father of the Sir John D'Oyley who held Greenlands against the Parliamentarians. He died in 1633. Lady D'Oyley was the sister of Francis Quarles, the author of "The Emblems," and the more than flattering epitaphs to herself and her husband were, in all probability, the work of that poet. Other memorials have been moved down into, or near, the tower. Amongst them are some of an earlier family, that of Scrope, and brasses of one still earlier, that of Sheepwash. We also see in the tower a capital example of wood-carving, now in the form of a cupboard, but said to have been constructed out of a bedstead which belonged to Cardinal Wolsey. It bears the Castle of Castile, and the Rose of York.

On the east side of the church we see a delightful old mansion with mullioned windows, and with many gables and many chimneys. This is the Manor House, which was built quite early in the seventeenth century by the Earl of Sunderland. Charles I. took refuge here on the 28th of April, 1646, when on his way to St. Albans, and escaped, it is said, by the connivance of Bulstrode Whitlock.

And now we must go higher up the pretty

valley which runs down between the wooded hills, and visit two or three picturesque little villages which lie on the Oxfordshire border. The first of these is Fingest, a tiny place situated amongst the hills, and possessing a Norman church. Here, however, there was once a Palace of the Bishop of Lincoln. The prelates of that enormous diocese, which extended from the Trent to the Thames, had palaces in various parts of the country, so that they might have different centres for the carrying out of their work. One of the bishops, Henry de Burgwash, who was Chancellor of England in the middle of the fourteenth century, encroached on the village common at Fingest for the purpose of enlarging his park. After his death his body was laid in the church, but his ghost, unable to rest on account of the injury inflicted on the parishioners, was seen in the park o'nights in the garb of a gamekeeper—so runs the tale—until he was able to communicate with some of the old servants, and desire them to give a message to the Canons of Lincoln that the land should be returned to the public. One can but suppose that some bold villager who—

"The tyrant of his fields withstood,"

took this roundabout method of conveying the

grievances of himself and his fellows to the Cathedral Chapter. But, however that may have been, the result was satisfactory, and Fingest had its common again.

Let us pass on to more authentic history. Thomas Delafield was the curate here about 1746, and employed himself in collecting much information with regard to the neighbourhood, especially about his own parish, into three manuscript volumes, two of which are in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford, while the third has been unfortunately lost. Thomas Langley of Great Marlow made much use of this collection in his "History of the Hundred of Desborough and Deanery of Wycombe," published in 1797. Lipscombe, the principal county historian, also refers to the same set of papers, so that Delafield's labours were not altogether fruitless, though he never published his history himself.

A little beyond Fingest is Turville or Turfield, and at Turville House, a seventeenth-century mansion, lived, nearly a century ago, Charles François Dumoriez. Through the stormy years of the close of the eighteenth century, Dumoriez distinguished himself on the continent, both as statesman and soldier; but notwithstanding his conspicuous services on behalf of the French Republic in Belgium and elsewhere, he came

into suspicion with the Directory on account of his more moderate views, and was forced to leave his native country for which he had done so much. He remained in exile, first at Hamburgh, but in 1804 he came over to England and took up his abode in this little village above the Thames valley. Here he died in 1823, and he lies buried in Henley Church. General Dumoriez was one of the many who, driven from their own country, have found their last home and their grave in our own island.

There is another little village close by, Ibstone, which also has a church of stone and flint, partly Norman. Many such little places shall we find amongst the Chiltern Hills, as

> ——"Advancing higher still
> The prospect widens, and the village church
> But little o'er the lowly roofs around,
> Rears its gray belfry and its simple vane."

But just now, instead of climbing higher we propose to descend from the high ground, and again reaching the banks of the Thames, continue our voyage. We pass many a pleasant mill-pool and foaming *lasher*, and rustling reed-bed and lake-like *broad*, as we glide on between the bright meadows "willow-veiled," and fringed inland by the advancing hills.

> "Ne'er hast thou been, ne'er shalt thou be forsook
> By youth and pleasure, who with dripping oar

Through the green meadows on thy banks explore
Each azure bend, and lily-bearing nook;
The pool by bathers sought, glassy and still,
The steady reach where the dark willows bend,
Thine angler-haunted current by the mill."

It is in such meadows that we find the scanty remains of the Abbey of Medmenham, the next place at which we propose to stop. They con-

Medmenham Abbey. East Front.

sist now of only a few fragments worked into buildings of far later date than that of the Cistercian founders. The original Abbey was, in its day, of some importance. It was an offshoot of another Cistercian House, that of Woburn, in Bedfordshire, and it was founded in 1201, by Walter de Bolebec, to whose brother

the Mother-Abbey owed its origin. Its Abbot occupied the position of Epistoler to the Order of the Garter, but at the time of its dissolution the House had lost its former renown, and the community consisted of two members only. Shortly afterwards it was sold to the family of Duffield, who, in the days of Elizabeth, or a little later, built the still existing mansion on its site, and the Abbey remained in their possession until 1799.

It was during their tenancy that the Abbey was again inhabited by those who called themselves by the name of a religious order, that of the Franciscans. But they had nothing to do with St. Francis of Assisi, for they took their name from that of their patron and chief, Sir Francis Dashwood, of West Wycombe Park. The veil of years has now fallen over this story in the history of the Abbey of Medmenham, but strange tales were once told of the doings here on the banks of the Thames in the middle of the last century. "Fay ce que voudras" was the motto of those jovial spirits, as we may still read inscribed on the entrance door, but there are many who say that nothing more took place at Medmenham than a too free use of the wine-bottle, a not uncommon failing of gentlemen of that day.

The principal members of the Brotherhood

were John Wilkes, Charles Churchill, Paul Whitehead, Robert Lloyd, Lord Melcombe Regis, Sir William Stanhope, Lovibond, Richard Hopkins, Sir John Dashwood King, Sir John Aubrey, and Dr. Benjamin Bates. The last mentioned was travelling physician to Lord Le Despencer. He first practised medicine at Aylesbury, and he died at Missenden in 1828, at the age of ninety-eight, so that he was through his long life a good deal connected with the county. He was the last survivor of the Medmenham Club, and always declared that though there was plenty of hard drinking at the Abbey, there was nothing more blameworthy. Some of the members, in addition to Wilkes, were not unknown to literary fame. Dr. Bates himself was a patron of Art, and as such visited Rome in company with Flaxman, the sculptor. Bob Lloyd was a dramatist, and wrote a play called *The Capricious Lover*, which was performed at Drury Lane in 1761. Wilkes describes him as "mild and affable in private life, of gentle manner, and very engaging in conversation, an excellent scholar, and a natural, easy poet." He is said, however, to have drunk himself to death, and to have died in the Fleet Prison in 1764. Another poet in the society was Paul Whitehead, who was also known as the Secretary. He died abroad in 1774, but his heart

was sent to England. We shall have something to say about that heart when we get to Lord Le Despencer's mausoleum at West Wycombe. The Club met in the low panelled room which faces the river. Its fittings are of the time of Queen Anne, but the wide chimney down which, according to the popular legend, the huge ape was lowered to the consternation of the company, who took it for an apparition of the evil one, is of earlier date.

Now let us try and make out something of the position and character of the buildings. The cloisters and tower on the river front are altogether a sham. Behind these lies the mansion of the Duffields, altered, as we have seen, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The front of this mansion is towards the east. It consisted of a centre and two wings, one of which is shown in our sketch. The lozenge on the porch bears the Duffield arms, beneath which is the motto of the eighteenth century Franciscans. The mansion was evidently built on the site of the Abbot's lodgings, a usual arrangement when a religious house was handed over to a lay proprietor. Behind we may find a few remains of the Cistercians, a window or two, and a round-headed doorway which was probably the Abbot's door into the cloisters. The conventual buildings have all disappeared,

and so has the church, with the exception of what appears to be one of the piers of the central crossing, now standing out in the meadows by itself, a shapeless mass of ruins.

The village of Medmenham is only half-a-mile or so away from the river, and we must

Medmenham Village.

not fail to visit it. It is partly surrounded by chalk cliffs, on one of which, just above the church, is perched a charming Jacobean house, built entirely of brick. Augustus Welby Pugin, during his visits to Danesfield, used always to visit the Lodge, as it is called, and study the mouldings of the brickwork in windows and

chimneys. The little church at the foot of the hill is a long low building, without a chancel arch. It contains a brass to Richard Levyng who died in 1412, and to his wife, Alice, who died in 1419. The pulpit has carvings, representing sacred subjects, and in the windows are small medallions, which are apparently of about the same date as the well-known Fairford windows. The south door, with its curious and original bolt and lock, is also well worth notice. As we return to the river we must not fail to enter the old house on the right-hand side, which is a very ancient one. It is now divided into two separate tenements, but these formed the two ends of one building, and were connected by a central hall, the beams and rafters of which we may find if we go upstairs.

The first place which we shall stop at below Medmenham is Danesfield, or as it perhaps ought more properly to be called, Danes-ditches. Here high up on the chalk cliffs which rise perpendicularly above the river, we find a large and strong camp. It is of horse-shoe shape, the heel being protected by the river, and the remaining portion being fortified by double ramparts and ditches. The Danes had very probably a stronghold here on one of their favourite waterways, but nothing is known of its history. The view from the edge of the

camp is very striking. At our feet is the broad Thames, here hurrying on to Hurley Weir, which spans the stream a little below. Towards the west we see Medmenham Abbey, standing amidst the flat meadows. In front we have the Berkshire hills. Just outside the line of the camp stands a modern house, which has been added to from time to time. Amongst these additions is a beautiful chapel designed by Pugin. Another hill, which stands behind the village of Medmenham, is also crowned by a camp, called "States," which is probably of British origin. If we happened to have walked up this hill when we were in the village, we should, perhaps, have noticed its most remarkable feature, a curtained or protected path leading down from the camp to a beautiful spring of water at the foot of the hill.

As we approach Marlow the houses and mansions cluster more closely together along the banks. Soon after passing Danesfield we see Hurleyford, or as it is usually erroneously written Harleyford, a red brick mansion, built in 1715 for Sir Robert Clayton, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1680, from designs by Sir Robert Taylor. Then about two miles farther, just before we come to the suspension bridge at Marlow, we see in the meadows at the outskirts of the town, Court Garden, a

mansion of the early part of the last century. It was built by Dr. Batty, who was Censor of the College of Physicians in 1763.

If we are fond of old houses we shall certainly land at Marlow and walk round the town, which is also well known as a great boating centre. Church and bridge are both new, and, it must be confessed, not very handsome. There was a bridge here at least as early as the time of Edward III., and in the Civil Wars a part of the bridge was destroyed by Major-General Brown. The ancient bridge has entirely disappeared, and an erection of quite another character has taken its place. The time to be on Marlow Bridge is on a bright day in the summer. It is then that the river is alive with boating parties—

> "Dropping down the river,
> Down the glancing river,
> Through the fleet of shallops,
> Through the fairy fleet,
> 'Midst the golden noontide,
> 'Neath the stately trees."

The church was built in 1834 on the site of an ancient one. Attempts have been made from time to time to improve its architectural features. Thomas Langley, whom we have already mentioned as the historian of the Hundred of Desborough, was buried in the

old church. His family were connected with the town. He died in 1801, aged only thirty-two, as we may read on a tablet erected to his memory. There is also an inscription to another writer and poet, Francis Edward Smedley, whose best-known work is that favourite of schoolboys, "Frank Farleigh." Smedley was born at Marlow in 1818, and came back to live with his mother at Beech Lodge in 1863, but his gentle life came to an end the next year. There are two other literary characters about whom we shall speak when we reach another part of the town.

Let us go and look at some of the old houses. A little way to the north-east of the church, in a side street, we find a very interesting one, known as the *Old Parsonage*. A portion of the house is Jacobean, or a little later, but in the centre there is a very unique specimen of a large hall with a gallery of black oak round two sides, and two large decorated windows, one at each end, almost flamboyant in design and ecclesiastical in character. In fact, there is a decided Continental look about the building. Close by is another fine house, *Marlow Place*, of a different style. It is a good specimen of early Georgian work, with pilasters and overhanging cornices. Next we turn into the broad High Street, which is closed at one

end by the church, and at the other by an old-fashioned inn, and turn westward along the road which leads to Medmenham and Hambleden. Soon on the left we see behind a high wall the roof and chimneys of *Remnantz*. Here was housed for a time the Royal Military College, which was founded at Marlow in 1799, and removed to Sandhurst in 1861. William Alexander, who was afterwards Keeper of Antiquities at the British Museum, was for a time Drawing Master at the Marlow College. A portion of the house has been pulled down since its educational days, but many of the rooms we shall find, if we enter, have good cornices and ceilings of the last century. The gardens are, however, the chief attraction, with their stiff yew hedges and arbours, in the style of Queen Anne; and over the stables is a clock turret designed by Sir Christopher Wren. A little farther along this road and on the same side is *The Croft* with its many gables.

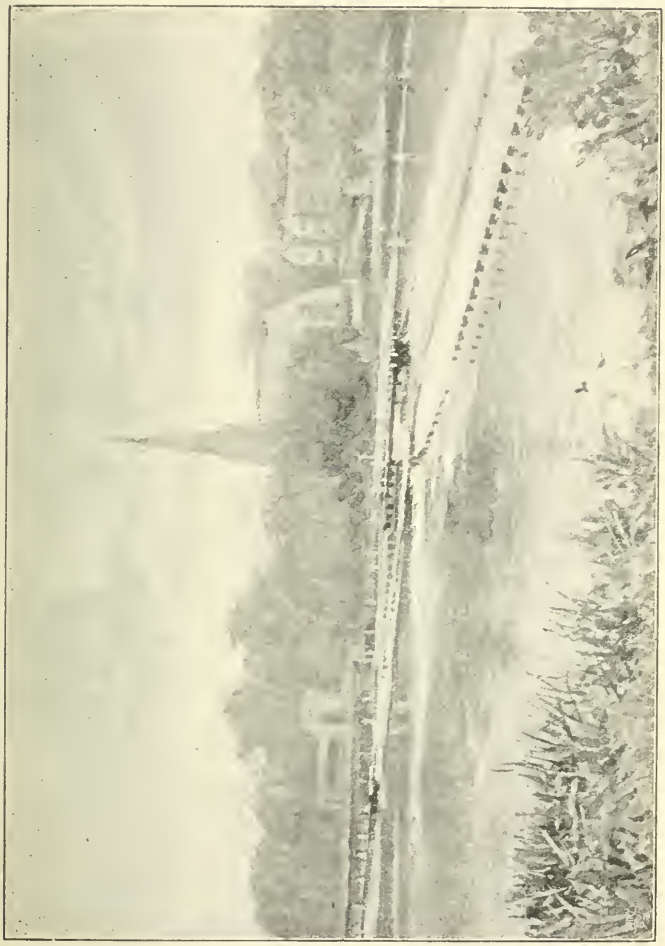
On the other side of the road, nearly opposite, are two buildings which we shall notice. The first is the house which was occupied by Percy Bysshe Shelley from the spring of 1817 to the spring of 1818. It was then called Albion House, but is now known as Shelley House, and an inscription records that it was the residence of the poet. It is a mistake, how-

ever, to say that he was here visited by Lord Byron. A room was prepared for the latter, and hung with black! but the expected occupant never came. Shelley first came to Marlow, on a visit to his friend Peacock, in 1816. In December of that year he paid a second visit, and selected this house, to which he brought his family in February, 1817. The largest room he fitted up as a library. At Albion House the Shelleys were visited by Claire Clairmont and her child, the Hunts, and Hogg. The poet spent much of his time in rambles by the river side, in walks about the country, and in boating. Sometimes he would be seen in Bisham Woods bareheaded, but crowned with wild clematis. In this way he spent the summer of 1817. He wrote some political pamphlets while here on questions of the day, from a strong Radical point of view, under the name of *The Hermit of Marlow*, and was charitable to the poor, inquiring personally into cases of distress which were brought before him. He complained, however, that the house was cold and damp, and he left it on the 7th of February, 1818.

Next door to Shelley House we find the Grammar School, which was founded in 1624 by Sir William Borlase, as a memorial to his son Henry, who was the Member for Marlow.

The town, we may mention, had returned representatives to Parliament from a very early date. The building is constructed of flint, the favourite material for old houses in these parts, as we must have observed again and again, and new portions have been added on in very good reproduction of the old work. The last house in the town on this side is Beech Lodge, which stands on a hill above the road. We have already referred to it as the last home of Francis Smedley. A house on the Oxford Road, farther to the north, was the residence of another well-known novelist, George Payne Rainsford James, the author of "Richelieu" and many other historical and romantic tales. He died at Venice, where he was British Consul, in 1860. Certainly these outskirts of Marlow are rich in literary reminiscences.

But we must leave this pleasant town on the Thames, and proceed on our voyage down the stream. As we thread our way amidst several islands which lie thickly in the river below the bridge, we look back and catch a pretty glimpse of the church rising above the foaming weir-pool. On the other side we have the lovely *Quarry Woods*, which are, however, in Berkshire, so we must not land, but row on until we reach the extreme south-



Marlow Weir.

eastern point of the Hundred which we are now exploring, that of Desborough, just where the white cliffs and hanging woods of Cliefden rise up steep and sheer above the river. Cliefden itself is not in our Hundred, for it is in the parish of Taplow, so we shall leave it undescribed for the present, but we shall note just before we come to where the little Wyck flows into the Thames, the Abbey Farm, which marks the site of the Abbey of Little Marlow. This religious house, which was sometimes called, by a barbarous mixture of Latin and French, by the name "de fontibus de Merlau," was a Benedictine establishment, and was probably founded by Galfridus le Despencer, the ancestor of those Despencers who were famous in the days of Henry III. and the two first Edwards, and who all bore the name of Hugh. Hugh the elder was Chief Justiciary of England, and played an important part in the Barons' War. He was present at the battle of Lewis in 1264, on the popular side, and in an old ballad he is called—

> "Despencer true, the good Sir Hugh,
> Our Justice and our Friend,"

but he fell at Evesham, that battle fatal to so many of his party, in 1265. He had married Aliva, the daughter of Philip Bassett, of High

Wycombe. Hugh the second, who married Eleanor, the eldest daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Hereford, became through his wife the possessor of the manor of Great Marlow. His fate was a tragic one. He had been made Governor of Bristol Castle by Edward II., whose supporter he was, but his garrison mutinied against him and delivered him up to the King's enemies, and he was, though nearly ninety years of age, hanged, without trial, at Hereford. The third Hugh was the favourite of Edward, and was also made away with in the same lawless fashion.

We shall find nothing left of the Abbey, but Browne Willis, the Buckinghamshire antiquary, describes the Hall and Chapel as existing in his time, that is, in the early part of the last century. We shall, however, perhaps look into the village church, which is not far distant. It has tower and chancel of about the date 1190. The nave and aisles were rebuilt in the fifteenth century by Nicholas de Ledwyck, who died in 1430, and whose tomb is in the church.

CHAPTER III.

THE VALLEY OF THE WYCK.

Hedsor House and Church—Wooburn—Bishops of Lincoln—Arthur Goodwin and John Hampden—Philip the Good Earl Wharton, and Thomas the Bad—Duke Philip—Pope's Lines—John Longland and the Episcopal Palace—The Church—Monuments of the Goodwins and Whartons—"Lovell the Dog"—Paper Mills—High Wycombe—Roman Remains—Market House and Guildhall—The Church—Sir William Petty, the Earls of Shelburne, and the Marquis of Lansdowne—Loakes House and Dr. Johnson—Sir Edmund Verney, the Standard Bearer—Hughenden—The Church—Its Windows and Decorations—The Effigies of the De Montforts—Lord Beaconsfield's Grave—The Manor House—West Wycombe House, Church, and Mausoleum—Lord le Despencer—Bradenham—Queen Elizabeth, the Clives, Isaac Disraeli—Radnage and Saunderton.

THE eastern side of the valley of the Wyck, just where it joins that of the Thames, is sometimes called *Nobleman's Corner* from the fact that three famous mansions, with their grounds and parks, stand close together at this particular spot. One of these, however, has ceased to be the property of a peer, and the one which stands the farthest to the west, Hedsor, is the only one in the Desborough Hundred. But

Hedsor is not only a mansion it is a parish, a very tiny one, as well. The church matches the parish, for it is the smallest in the county. It stands in the park close to the house, and though partly of ancient date has been both added to and provided with handsome but modern fittings. It contains the monument of Nathaniel Hook, who died in 1793, and was of some note as a Roman historian. Hedsor House was rebuilt in 1862. It occupies a charming position above the Thames. The sham castle, which occupies a conspicuous position overlooking Cookham, was built by Lord Boston who was equerry to George III., and erected this building to the honour of the Sovereign in 1778.

But we must leave the banks of the larger river and follow up the valley of the smaller stream. Just on the other side of Hedsor we come to Wooburn. Here we shall have to deal with the past rather than with anything of particular interest now visible. We have already noticed that the Bishops of Lincoln had many palaces in their great diocese, and one of these palaces was at Wooburn. The manor also belonged to the Bishops from the time of the Conquest, and was exchanged for a Crown manor by Bishop Holbeach in 1547. Foxe tells us some stories about a dungeon called "Little Ease,"

which formed part of the palace, and of unfortunate heretics being tortured there by order of the Bishops. For instance, he has a tale of one Thomas Harding, who was treated in this way and then burnt in a neighbouring dell. But then Foxe is not always to be trusted, and Bishops in England hardly behaved in this high-handed way even in the sixteenth century.

In 1549, two years after the Crown had acquired it, the manor was granted to John Russell, Earl of Bedford, and Francis, the second Earl, sold it to Sir John Goodwin, whose ancestors had been tenants of the Bishops. Of the Goodwin family the most famous was Arthur, the friend and colleague of John Hampden, who sat with him in the Long Parliament for the county of Buckingham. When the freeholders, learning that their beloved and trusted representative, Hampden, was in danger of arrest, went up to London in a body several thousand strong to protect him, Arthur Goodwin had much to do with the demonstration. When the end came and Hampden had ridden wounded from the Field of Chalgrove to the house of Ezekiel Brown at Thame, Goodwin followed his friend and was with him on his death-bed.

Arthur Goodwin's daughter became the second wife of Philip, Lord Wharton, and thus

introduced a new family who came from Shap Abbey, in Westmoreland, which had been granted to Thomas, first Lord Wharton, as a reward for his services as Warden of the Scottish Marches. The husband of Jane Goodwin was the fourth Lord Wharton. He was a strong but not a fanatical supporter of the Puritan party, to which his marriage with Goodwin's daughter would attach him. In religion he was a Presbyterian, and he left by will a rent charge on certain estates for the purpose of providing Bibles, copies of a catechism called "The Grounds and Principles of the Christian Religion," and other books, for the use of children in several parishes in Buckinghamshire, most of them in the neighbourhood of Wooburn. Lord Wharton lived to a great age, and was actually amongst those who invited the Prince of Orange to England. The latter subsequently visited his venerable supporter at Wooburn.

Thomas, the third son and the successor of Philip, Lord Wharton, was a man of very different character, and occupied a much more prominent position than his father had done, though not unfortunately on account of his virtues. In 1706, he was created Earl of Wharton; in 1708, he was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; in 1715, he became Marquis

of Wharton, and in that year he died. He was a keen sportsman, and his stud of race-horses and kennel of greyhounds could be matched nowhere in the kingdom. In politics he was a strong Whig, admired and trusted by his own party, but feared as well as hated by his opponents.

Some idea of the extravagance of Wharton may be formed from the fact that he expended £10,000 on laying out the grounds at the old palace alone, besides what he did in adding to the episcopal building so as to make it a mansion worthy of himself. His unfortunate wife —for she was surely such—was Anne Lee, the second daughter of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley and Quarrendon, the latter place being in Buckinghamshire. She died at the age of twenty-six, thirty years before her worthless husband.

Philip, the son of Earl Thomas, succeeded his father in 1716, but he is hardly connected with Wooburn. Alternately Jacobite and Hanoverian, he was created Duke of Northumberland by King James, and Duke of Wharton by King George. In character he appears to have much resembled his father, and Pope in his "Moral Essays" seems, as it were, to be describing both Whartons, for surely the lines

> "A rebel to the very king he loves,
> He dies sad outcast of each ch reh and state,"

must apply to Duke Philip, who died in exile and poverty in the monastery of the Charitable Friars at Tarragona in 1731, a convert, it is said, to the Church of Rome, leaving behind him two volumes of poems and essays.

> "Ask you why Wharton broke through every rule?
> 'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool.
> Nature well known, no prodigies remain,
> Comets are regular, and Wharton plain."

We shall not find any remains of the Episcopal Palace, unless it be the fragment of a garden wall. A modern house occupies its site. John Longland, Dean of Salisbury and Chancellor of Oxford, who favoured the divorce of Henry VIII. from Katharine of Arragon, built much of it. He also gave to the parish church the second bell, which bears his name.

The church stands close to the water side. It contains monuments of the Goodwin family, and that of the first Lord Wharton of Wooburn, a handsome mural monument of grey marble. We note that the Goodwins are described as of Uburne. From this some have supposed that the original name of the place was Up-burne, but it is well known that the first letter of the word Wood was frequently unpronounced in former days, so we may still consider that the village takes its name from the Burn flowing through the wood.

Another celebrity connected with Wooburn was Francis Viscount Lovell, who held the manor of Wooburn Deyncourt, to which he succeeded through his grandmother. He was that minister of Richard III. whose name has been handed down in the rhymes of the unfortunate William Colingbourne as "Lovell the dog." His estates at Wooburn were escheated to the Crown, but except for the fact that he held the property, Lovell does not seem to have had much to do with the place though he was steward of the Chiltern Hundreds. Minster Lovell, in Oxfordshire, where he met with his tragic fate, being apparently starved to death in a subterranean chamber, is at some distance.

The interest of Wooburn is, as we have already said, chiefly connected with the history of those who have had to do with the place, so after looking round the very handsome and interesting church which contains other objects worth notice besides the monuments of the Goodwins and Whartons, we will pass on up the valley of the little burn.

We may notice that the Wyck has in this, the lower part of his course, a good deal of work to do in the matter of the manufacture of paper. We passed paper mills at Cowes End, and again at Wooburn. Others we find at Londwater and at Wycombe Marsh, and all are

within a few miles of one another. A manufacturer of some note, John Bates, had the last-mentioned mills rather more than a century ago. He was specially successful in the production of paper fitted for the reception of impressions from engraved plates, and he received the gold medal of the Society of Arts for his inventions.

Five miles from Wooburn we enter the important and bustling town of High, or Market Wycombe, the centre of the chair-making trade, the raw material for which is supplied by the beech woods which clothe the adjacent hills.

Wycombe is an ancient place. Its name proclaims its Saxon history, as it is sometimes called Chipping, or Cheaping Wycombe, and was, therefore, a market town in early days. But earlier people than the Saxons had settled in this pleasant spot in the valley of the Wyck, for Roman remains have been discovered in the Rye, or Common Meadow, to the south of the town. In other matters, too, the place has an ancient record, since the municipality dates from the time of Henry I. In coaching days also it had much importance, situated as it was on the great high road from London to Oxford, which runs across the centre of the county.

The old buildings of the town are disappearing, but in the centre stands the Market-house, with the Guildhall above, built by the Earl of Shelburne in 1757. We shall go up into the Council Chamber to look at the portraits of Philip the "Good" Lord Wharton, and of his wife, Jane Goodwin. There is also a portrait of Henry, their fourth son, after Vandyke. Thus, the Whartons, we see, were not only connected with Wooburn, but with Wycombe as well. The octagonal building adjoining was erected a few years later.

The church, which also stands in the centre of the town, is a large and handsome specimen, chiefly of the work of the Decorated period. It is, in fact, one of the *show* churches of the county. There was first a Norman church, of which, however, only a few stones remain, but the rebuildings have, it seems, always been on the same lines. Then there followed an Early English church, to which belonged the arch of the north chapel, and some of the windows which we can still see. We can trace on the outside the gables of this building. To this period also belongs the beautiful south porch. Next a Decorated nave was built, and a clerestory was added. The central tower was also taken down about this period. The transepts of the cruciform building can only

be made out from the exterior. In Tudor times the tower at the west end was built by Richard Messenger, the then Vicar, who was the friend of Cardinal Wolsey, and was his clerk of the works at the building of Christ Church, Oxford. The openings at the extreme end of the north aisle were evidently a con-

High Wycombe.

nection with some building which once stood in the churchyard. Lastly, Lord Shelburne also tried his hand at church building, and added the pinnacles of the tower in the last century. The church was carefully restored under the direction of George Edmund Street. In the north chapel is a huge monument, by Schee-

macher, to Henry, Earl of Shelburne. It represents the Earl, his wife, his son, his two daughters, and his son's wife, all of whom died before him. The son is represented in the costume of a Roman soldier. Possibly many will prefer the monument, by Carlini, on the south side of the church, to other members of the Petty family.

In the centre of the great Shelburne monument is a medallion of Sir William Petty, the founder of the family. He was the son of a clothier at Romsey, where he is buried. He was born in 1623, and studied medicine at Leyden and Paris, and became Professor of Anatomy, besides being also Gresham Professor of Music. In 1652 he went to Ireland in the double capacity of Physician to the Army, and Secretary to Henry Cromwell, then the Lieutenant-Governor of that island. Sir William died, very wealthy, in 1687, and his son purchased the manor of High Wycombe in 1700, from Thomas Archdale, having been created Baron Shelburne the previous year. He resided at Loakes House, or, as it is now called, Wycombe Abbey, and became Earl Shelburne in 1709. But the most famous descendant of Sir William was William, the third Earl Shelburne, a well-known statesman of the last century. He was born in 1737, and in

early life served in the army and was present at the battle of Minden. He was a follower of the Earl of Chatham, and in 1782, on the death of Lord Rockingham, himself formed an administration, though he was only in office for a few months. But a good deal happened during those few months, for it was then that Lord Howe kept the French and Spanish fleets in check, and finally sailed to the relief of Gibraltar, where General Elliot had been holding out for so long and with such courage against far superior forces. It was also at this time that the *Royal George* sank at Spithead, an event which caused remarkable sensation. Moreover, William Pitt first held office under Lord Shelburne. The latter continued to reside at Loakes, and was frequently visited there by Dr. Johnson. In 1784 he was created Marquis of Landsdowne, and in 1798 he sold his Wycombe property and the house to Lord Carrington. He died in 1805, and is buried in the north chapel of the church near the great family monument; but there is nothing whatever to mark his grave.

Lord Carrington pulled down Loakes House, and it was rebuilt by Wyatt. Why, or how it came to be called *The Abbey*, is a difficult question to answer. The same thing may be said of another house in the town, which is

called *The Priory*, apparently for no reason whatever.

The Grammar School, which stands in the High Street, has also been rebuilt, but a few of the arches and piers of the chapel of the Hospital of St. John, which formed the original school, are still left standing in the grounds. Edmund Waller, the poet, was a schoolboy here in early days, though he was afterwards at Eton.

There was another educational establishment here in the last century, a military training school, which, like the one at Marlow, is now merged in the College at Sandhurst. This establishment occupied the house to the north-west of the church, which now contains the free library.

There is one other local celebrity whom we must not fail to remember at Wycombe. Sir Edmund Verney, of Claydon House, who fell at Edgehill with the royal standard in his hand, sat for this borough in the early days of the Long Parliament.

About two miles north of Wycombe, in a lovely valley, stands Hughenden. The older name of Hitchenden has been almost lost. In a pretty park which slopes down to the little stream, a feeder of the Wyck, stand Hughenden Manor, for many years the residence of Lord

Beaconsfield, and the beautiful church, beneath the walls of which he lies buried.

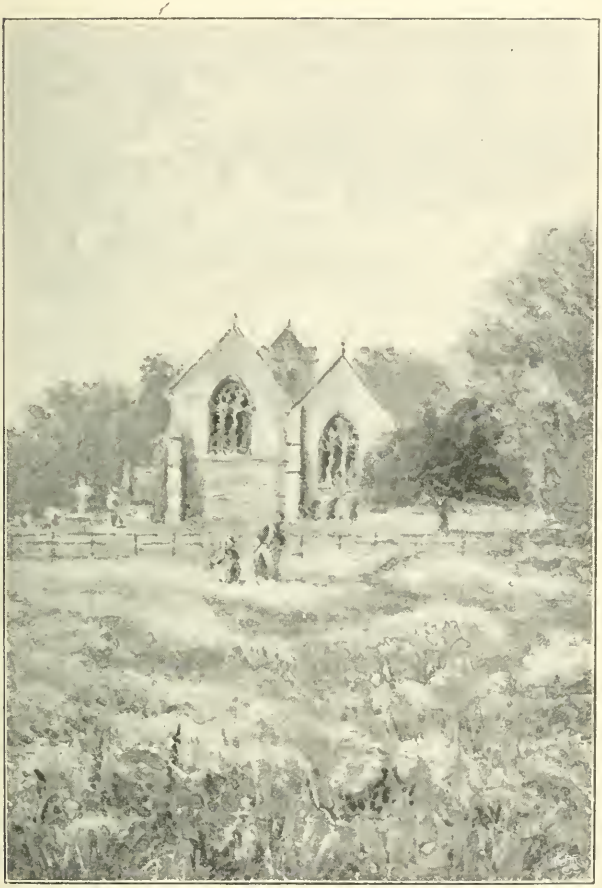
Let us begin with the church. It has been nearly rebuilt, but some portion of the tower is Early English, and there is a Norman doorway beneath the porch on the south side. Within, it has been sumptuously decorated, chiefly as a memorial to the late Earl. The "Te Deum" east window was erected by his personal friends, Lord Rowton, Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, and Sir Philip Rose. The south window was subscribed for by Undergraduates of Oxford. The west window was provided by the general memorial fund. Both these windows are also "Angel" windows. It is needless to say the church is dedicated to St. Michael. The frescoes on the walls represent the Adoration of the Magi, the Evangelists, and the nine Angelic Orders. On the north side of the chancel, close to the seat once occupied by the Earl, is a tablet erected by the Queen, which contains his portrait in profile, by R. C. Belt. Above hangs the banner of the Earl as Knight of the Garter, which was formerly over his stall in St. George's Chapel at Windsor. Another south window is to two young baronets who died in the Crimean campaign. The elder, Sir William Norris Young, fell at the battle of the Alma, on

September 20th, 1854, at the age of twenty-one; and the younger, Sir George Young, succeeded his brother for a few weeks only, and died of cholera, at Sebastopol, in a little more than a month, at the age of nineteen.

Hughenden Church was well known to archæologists long before the time of Lord Beaconsfield, for there is a font of the thirteenth century, and there are five very remarkable tombs, with effigies, which are now in the north chapel, but some of which have been removed from their original places.

The principal and most interesting one represents a man in the usual military dress of the end of the thirteenth century, and is a finely executed piece of work. The sheath of his huge sword bears seven small coats of arms, and on his shield are the arms of De Montford. On his surcoat are those of Wellesborne. The effigy is supposed to be that of Richard de Montfort, son of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the hero who fell at Evesham in 1265. It is also supposed that he assumed the name of Wellesborne, and settled at Hughenden. Experts in armour consider the effigy as particularly interesting in many details. For instance, it is clothed in armour, partly plate and partly chain. Experts in heraldry are also interested

in the arms which it bears. The lion of the



Hughenden Church.

De Montforts, and the griffin of the Welles-

bornes, have each an unfortunate child in their clutches. Another figure in low relief has also the arms of De Montford and Wellesborne. On a third effigy we see the armour of the time of the Black Prince. Then, again, we have examples of the time of Henry VI., and all bear the family arms. There are also many interesting brasses, as well as one of those emaciated figures, partly enveloped in a shroud, which were introduced in some mediæval monuments as emblematical of death.

To visit the grave of Lord Beaconsfield we must go outside the church. The body of the great statesman is buried at the east end of the chancel. By his side lie the Countess of Beaconsfield, who died in 1872, and James Disraeli, his brother, who died in 1868. Here also is buried Sarah, the widow of James Brydges Williams, who left her fortune to Lord Beaconsfield, and dying in 1863, was laid here at her own request. The Earl himself died on April 19th, 1881, and the anniversary of his death is always marked by the laying of wreaths on the grave, or on his seat within the chancel. Mr. James Searight, at whose expense almost all the restoration of the church was carried out, also lies in the churchyard.

The Manor of Hughenden was once held by Edgitha, Queen of Edward the Confessor. It

was purchased by Lord Beaconsfield, whose connection with Wycombe had begun in 1832, when he contested the borough, almost as a Radical, in opposition to the old-fashioned Whigs. To trace his after life would be to write the political history of our country for the next fifty years. Let us rather think of the aged statesman coming to his lovely park and pleasant country house, to rest awhile from the turmoil of party conflict. Let us picture him, as he is said often to have been seen, seated on the terrace in front of his windows, smoking his cigar, and watching with interest the village cricketers in the park below him. The house itself is a modern one, but is still kept up as it was when Lord Beaconsfield quitted it for the last time, for he died in London. It contains his library and the portraits of his friends. The obelisk, on the crest of the hill close by, bears inscriptions to his Countess and to his father, Isaac Disraeli, whose house we shall come to higher up the valley of the Wyck.

Let us return to Wycombe, and proceed up that valley. As soon as we leave the town we pass, high up on the left-hand side, earthworks, known as Danesborough or Desborough Camp. It is this camp which gives its name to our Hundred. About two miles further the

valley bends westward, and hereabouts the little river rises. Just at the bend is a little village once called Haverington or Harrington, but now known as West Wycombe. It lies nestling down between two hills. On that to the south stands West Wycombe House. The house itself was built by Sir Francis Dashwood, and enlarged by his son, Lord Le Despencer, of Medmenham Abbey fame. The park is very pretty, running down the sides of the hill, and the grounds were laid out by that skilled landscape-gardener, Repton.

On the opposite hill is the church, which was also built by Sir Francis Dashwood. It replaced an ancient one of which only the lower portion of the tower remains. Its date is 1763, and it is a curious example of the style of that period. It is what is commonly called classical in design, and the fittings are very remarkable. Mahogany chairs serve for pulpit and reading-desk, and the font is a bronze basin on a tripod. It is no longer used for service in the winter, however, as there is a modern church, much more accessible, down in the village below. In front of the church is a large mausoleum, an hexagonal building, open to the sky in the centre. Within are monuments of Lord Le Despencer, who died in 1781, and of his two wives Lady Mary Fane and Mary King.

Here, too, was held, on the 16th of August, 1775, a solemn service for the burial of the heart of Paul Whitehead, of Twickenham, the poet and secretary of the Medmenham Society, who died abroad, but left that portion of his body by will to Lord Le Despencer. It was, however, at some time or other taken from its resting-place.

Lord Le Despencer did not confine himself to church-building in what he did for his village. He constructed the broad straight road which leads to High Wycombe, and set up a monumental sign-post, as we may see, to commemorate the undertaking. He also ordered the formation of the caves which we may find about half-way up the Church Hill, as a means of providing work for the labourers during a hard winter. Strange to say, this extraordinary and, if reports are true, most dissolute country gentleman, found his way into the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Bute in 1763. He was at that time Sir Francis Dashwood, and his budget as Chancellor was a remarkable one. It was more than a failure, it was a blunder. Amongst other things, he proposed to put a heavy tax upon cyder, and the apple-bearing counties were at once in revolt from the Government. However, Lord Bute resigned shortly afterwards, and his

Chancellor of the Exchequer resigned likewise and was raised to the peerage.

We have now arrived at the head of the valley, and find ourselves on the bare chalk uplands. But there are a few little villages nestling in the coombes beneath, which belong to Desborough Hundred. The first which we come to is Bradenham. Here Queen Elizabeth was, in 1566, entertained by Edward, Lord Windsor of Bradenham, in the Manor-house which stands on the slope of the hill at the head of the village green. The mansion had been built by the second Lord Windsor, but it was much altered by the Johnson family in the time of Queen Anne and George I. The entrance-hall, however, though remodelled, is the original hall of the Clives. Most of the rooms are panelled, and many of the door-frames are beautifully carved.

The house was occupied for twenty years by Isaac Disraeli, who took it on a lease in 1827, and died in it in 1847. In his time the room now used as the drawing-room was entirely lined with bookshelves, but all the best books were removed to Hughenden by his son, Benjamin Disraeli, who spent a good part of his early life in this house.

We shall take a walk on the beautiful yew terraces formed on the hill above the house,

and then we shall look into the church which stands on the other side of the mansion. There is a richly-worked Saxon south door, and there are also some Saxon windows. The chantry chapel to the north was built by William Lord Windsor in 1542. It contains some monuments of the Pye family, and an inscription to an old lady, Joanna Mincher, who died at the age of one hundred and three. There is a mural tablet to Isaac and Maria Disraeli, who lie buried in the vault below amongst the Clives. Campanologists will be interested to learn that two of the bells are of the date 1312, and were cast by Michael de Wymbis.

At Radnage, which stands a little farther to the east, and is nearly shut in by the hills, there is a little Late Decorated church with a Norman tower.

There is still one more parish which occupies a long narrow slip of county, and forms the extreme north-western point of Desborough Hundred. This place is Saunderton. It once consisted of two manors, and possessed two churches. One of these, St. Nicholas, has, however, entirely disappeared, but the other, St. Mary, is a decorated edifice, and contains the brass of William Saunderton, dated 1430.

We have now finished our exploration of the western side of the Hundred of Desborough,

and away to the north-east we can discern the highest points of the Chilterns. A little beyond Princes Risborough we can see the mouths of the lovely glens which run up into the hills above the two villages of Kimble. Farther to our right, but concealed behind a ridge, is the house that was once the home of John Hampden, and farther north of this is Chequers.

We have crossed the water-shed, and we are looking towards the basin of the Thame and the rich Vale of Aylesbury. But we must not leave the hills, nor follow the little brooks which now begin to trickle northwards. We will content ourselves with the many pleasant glimpses of upland scenery around us.

"Where woods of ash and beech,
And partial copses fringe the green hill-foot,
The upland shepherd rears his modest home;
There wanders by a little nameless stream
That from the hill wells forth, bright now and clear,
Or after rain with chalky mixture gray,
But still refreshing in its shallow course
The cottage garden." *Charlotte Smith.*

CHAPTER IV.

NEAR BURNHAM BEECHES.

Cliefden—George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and the Countess of Shrewsbury—Taplow—Hitcham—Dorney and the Palmers—Richard Montagu—Boveney—Burnham Church—Rector William Cole—Robert Aldrich—Burnham Beeches—Dropmore and its Gardens—View from the Terrace—Farnham Royal—The Manor and its Customs—Hedgerley House and Church—The Bulstrodes of Bulstrode—Chancellor Jeffreys—Mrs. Montague—Edward, Duke of Somerset—Captain Mayne Reed—Wilton Park—James Du Pré—Beaconsfield Church—Tombs of Burke and Waller—Gregories and Hall Barns—Penn and Lord Howe.

We have now finished with the Hundred of Desborough, and we will begin to explore that of Burnham, which takes its name from the parish so famous for its Beech-woods. Let us return to the Thames, and take those places first which are to be found on its banks. We first row beneath the white cliffs of Cliefden, and its hanging woods. Enormous yew-trees grow in the clefts of the chalk, and winding paths lead along ledges to caves and fissures. On the summit, surrounded by beautiful grounds, is Cliefden House, but the mansion is

of more recent date than its surroundings. In fact there have been several houses on this site. The first seems to have been the one built by George Villiers, the second Duke of Buckingham, whose architect was Archer. This was burnt down in 1795. A second house was pulled down, and a third was built in 1830. This third house was also burnt, and a fourth was built, as we see it now, in 1849, from the designs of Sir Charles Barry.

Of the early owners of Cliefden, by far the most remarkable was the first builder. Many writers have described his character, but none of them have been able to speak favourably of him, though all praise his genius. Bishop Burnett says that "he gave himself up to a monstrous course of studied immoralities." Horace Walpole tries to say what he can good of him by praising his genius, and "laments that such a man should have been devoid of every virtue." Poets have introduced him into their verses. Dryden has portrayed Buckingham under the name of Zimri.

> "In the first ranks of these did Zimri stand;
> A man so various, that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
> Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong,
> Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
> But, in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:

> Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
> Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
> Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
> With something new to wish, or to enjoy."
>
> *Absalom and Architophel.*

This George Villiers, son of the Duke of Buckingham, favourite of James I., who perished so tragically at Portsmouth, succeeded to the title on the murder of his father in 1628. Through the Civil Wars he fought for the Royal cause, and was present at the battle of Worcester. He was with Charles II. during his exile in Holland, and returned with him at the Restoration. He fell into disgrace at Court, where he had been admired for his wit and abilities, on the supposition that he was acting in opposition to the King, and in 1676 was committed to the Tower. Philip, the good Lord Wharton, a man of character strangely different to his own, was mixed up in political affairs with him, and shared his imprisonment. In 1680 the Duke was again in violent opposition to the Court, and retired to the country in failing health. Seven years later, when fox-hunting on his estates in Yorkshire, he caught a chill from sitting on the grass when heated by the chase. In a few days he died in the house of one of his tenants on Kirby Moorside. His death is described by Pope as having been that of a beggar, and amidst

miserable surroundings. This is not true as regards the first point, for Buckingham, though extravagant, had not utterly ruined himself. The other fiction is from its character rather severe on the unfortunate tenant of the Duke. Pope has caught hold of part of the popular idea, but only for the sake of marking a contrast between the farm-house on the moors and the splendours of Cliefden twenty years before.

"In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies—alas! how changed from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!
Gallant and gay in Cliefden's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love;
Or just as gay at council, in a ring
Of mimic statesmen and their merry king.
No wit to flatter, left of all his store,
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more.
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends
And fame: this lord of useless thousands ends."

Moral Essays.

His burial is thus recorded in the parish register: "April 17th, Georges Villers, forth dooke of bookingham."

The words in Pope, "wanton Shrewsbury," refer to the elopement of Villiers and the Countess of Shrewsbury to Cliefden, and the subsequent duel between the Duke and the wronged

husband. The story of this famous duel has been much embellished. Let us hope that the woman, bad though she was, was not actually present dressed as a boy, and holding her lover's horse, according to the popular story. Even worse things were said of her, too monstrous to be repeated. Samuel Pepys, who dearly loved to set down in his diary a bit of Court scandal, tells of the affair in lengthy but sober terms, under date January 17th, 1667:—"Much discourse of the duel yesterday between the Duke of Buckingham, Holmes, and one Jenkins on one side, and my Lord of Shrewsbury, Sir John Talbot, and one Bernard Howard on the other side; and all about my Lady Shrewsbury, who is at this time, and hath for a great while been, a mistress to the Duke of Buckingham. And so her husband challenged him, and they met yesterday in a close near Barn Elms, and there fought; and my Lord Shrewsbury is run through the body, from the right breast through the shoulder, and Sir John Talbot all along up one of his arms, and Jenkins killed upon the place, and the rest all in a little manner wounded. This will make the world think that the King hath good counsellors about him, when the Duke of Buckingham, the greatest man about him, is a fellow of no more sobriety than to fight about a mistress.

And this may prove a very bad accident to the Duke of Buckingham, but that my Lady Castlemaine do rule well at this time as much as ever she did, and she will, it is believed, keep all matters well with the Duke of Buckingham; though this is a time that the King will be very backward, I suppose, to appear in such a business. And it is pretty to hear how the King heard some notice of this challenge a week or two ago, and did give it to my Lord General to confine the Duke, or take security that he should not do any such thing as fight; and the General trusted to the King, that he, sending for him, would do it, and the King trusted to the General."

Two days later, Pepys wrote, "Lord Shrewsbury is likely to do well." But the prospects of recovery lasted only for a short time, and in a few days the unfortunate husband was as dead as poor Jenkins. Buckingham had a wife of his own, Mary, the daughter and heiress of Lord Fairfax, the Parliamentary general, "whom he deserted when living, and left without a memento at his death."

Villiers spent enormous sums of money, not only on the house, but on the grounds, and some of the terraces, walks, and "proud alcoves" which we still see are probably his work. He was not content with the natural beauties of

the spot alone, but introduced many productions from foreign countries; and the gardens must have been one of the most marvellous of the rather artificial horticultural creations of his day.

Cliefden is situated in the parish of Taplow, and leaving the beautiful cliffs we soon arrive at that place, which stands near the foot of the hills. The church is a red brick creation of this century, but contains some brasses which were in an older building. About a mile to the west is Hitcham, with a little church full of brasses and monuments of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

Presently we pass Maidenhead, with its seething weir-pool, rustling reed-beds, and fleet of row-boats, which, backed up as they are by the Taplow hills, form so pretty a picture when viewed from the old bridge, or from that of later date which carries the Great Western Railway. The town is, however, in Berkshire; so we pass beneath these bridges without resting, and find ourselves in the flat far-stretching meadows through which the Thames, after having for so long hugged the slopes of the Chilterns, now begins to flow.

We pass Monkey Island with its painted halls adorned with pictures of monkeys—hence the name—and then come to where the river sweeps

around the two southernmost villages of the Hundred of Burnham, Dorney and Boveney. They stand on very flat ground, and were probably once surrounded by water, and from this circumstance acquired the last syllable of their names, eye or eyot, which means an island. Dorney has a manor-house, the ancient residence of the Palmer family, who have been here since the early part of the seventeenth century. Two of the family, Sir Thomas Palmer and his son Philip, were distinguished in the Civil Wars, and are buried in the church. The latter was cup-bearer to Charles II.

The church, which is mostly Perpendicular, contains the monument of Sir William Garrard, who died just before the Palmers came. Richard Montagu, Bishop of Chichester, and afterwards Bishop of Norwich, was born at Dorney, in 1578. He was a great friend of Archbishop Laud, and ran considerable risk from the Parliamentary party on account of his teaching on the question of the royal supremacy. He escaped, however, by giving security to the amount of two thousand pounds for his appearance before the House of Commons, and died in 1641, just on the eve of the Civil War.

We will now strike inland, across Dorney Common to the parish which gives its name to the Hundred, the "Home by the Burn." Burn-

ham was a place of importance in Saxon days, for the kings of Mercia had a palace at Cippenham, a part of the parish which we come to soon after we leave Dorney. Close by is the site of Burnham Abbey, a Benedictine house, founded by Richard, King of the Romans, in 1265, and endowed by the family of De Molyns. The village itself is about a mile or so north of the Abbey. The church contains brasses of the family of Eyre, of the sixteenth century, and many monuments of later date. Archæologists will remember that William Cole was Rector of Burnham from 1774 to 1780. This early antiquary had been previously Rector of Bletchley, in quite another part of the county, but was a native of Cambridgeshire. He collected an enormous amount of archæological information, especially about parishes near Cambridge, and was assisted by other antiquarians of his day, such as James Granger, who was vicar of a parish higher up the Thames—Shiplake; and Richard Gough, of the "Sepulchral Monuments." He became Rector of Burnham at the close of his life, for he died in 1782. Another antiquary, Jacob Bryant, lived at Cippenham, and died there in 1804.

A rather famous native of Burnham was Robert Aldrich, Master and Provost of Eton, and afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, who died in

1555. In early life he was a correspondent of Erasmus, who called him "Blandæ eloquentiæ juvenis."

But to most people the name of Burnham is associated not with deceased celebrities, but with some of the loveliest woodland scenery to be found in our island. The special feature which distinguishes *Burnham Beeches* from all other beech-woods is the unusual appearance of the trees. This is owing to the fact that here the beeches have been pollarded, and we have, therefore, instead of the usual drooping branches which are characteristic of this class of tree, delightful gnarled and twisted limbs forming by their variety a splendid series of diversified forms for the woodland-painter.

The poet Gray sometimes came to stay with his uncle in this neighbourhood, and wrote to Horace Walpole the following account of his visit, and his impression of *The Beeches*. "I arrived safe at my uncle's, who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he continues still to regale his ears and nose with their comfortable noise and stink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I should ride, and reading when I should hunt. My

comfort amidst all this is, that I have, at the distance of half-a-mile, through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human being in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people, who love their necks as well as I do, may venture to climb, and crags that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous; both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches and other reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds.

> "And as they bow their hoary tops relate,
> In murm'ring sounds, the dark decrees of Fate;
> While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
> Cling to each leaf, and swarm on every bough.

"At the foot of one of these squats me I (*Il Penseroso*); and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sportive squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there. In this situation I often converse with my Horace—aloud, too; that is, talk to you,

but I do not remember that I ever heard you answer me."

If we want to see woods of a more formal character we must look into Dropmore Park, which lies to the west of Burnham. In this space of ground, enclosed from the common by Lord Grenville, is a magnificent collection of pines and cedars. But the park is not altogether taken up by fir-woods, for from time to time we come to some spot which commands the Thames valley. It is said that the view from one of these terraces inspired Thomas Gray to write his "Ode on a distant prospect of Eton College," for hence we can—

> "——— Th' expanse below
> Of grove, of lawns, of mead, survey,
> Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
> Wanders the hoary Thames along
> His silver winding way."

On the other side of Burnham Common we find Farnham Royal. This manor was held by the service of putting the glove on the right-hand of the King, and supporting his arm while he held the sceptre, at his coronation. When the Earl of Shrewsbury exchanged the manor with Henry VIII., he retained this service. Henceforward this *Home in the Ferns* was distinguished as *royal*.

The church was rebuilt in 1868, and nothing

ancient is left, except a portion of the chancel. There are, however, some old monuments; amongst them a brass plate to Eustace Marshall, who, like Vicar Messenger of Wycombe, was clerk-of-the-works at the building of Christ Church, Oxford, and who died in 1564. Here, also, is buried Edward Chandler, the author of the "Defence of Christianity." He was Bishop successively of Lichfield, Lincoln, and Durham, and died in 1750. Jacob Bryant, the antiquary of Cippenham, also lies here.

About three miles north of Farnham Royal we come to Hedgerley. The church stands on a little hill north of the park, but has been rebuilt. There is a curious brass which was originally that of Thomas Totyngton, Abbot of Bury St. Edmund's, who died in 1312, but was appropriated in 1540, after the dissolution of that abbey, for the use of Dame Margaret Bulstrode. Such instances of brasses reversed and used for later inscriptions are, however, not unknown elsewhere.

Hedgerley is about a mile away from Bulstrode Park. Here was the seat of the old family of Bulstrode, one of whose daughters was the mother of Bulstrode Whitlock of Fawley Court, the Parliamentary statesman. We had something to say of that remarkable man when we began our tour. There is a legend of

the family having taken their rather curious name from an event in the history of one of their Saxon ancestors in the days of the Conqueror. The doughty thane had a strong objection to handing over his estates to a follower of the Norman Duke, and appeared, together with his seven sons, all mounted on bulls for lack of horses, at the head of their men, to resist the intruder. William, it is said, came to the opinion that it would be better to let the rightful owner continue in possession. However this may have been, the Bulstrodes remained here till the seventeenth century, and in the year 1686 Judge Jeffreys, of evil fame, built himself a mansion in their park.

Horace Walpole got to Bulstrode in one of his Buckinghamshire tours, and this is what he has to say of the house as he found it:—"A melancholy monument of Dutch magnificence, having a brave gallery of old pictures, and a chapel with two fine windows of modern painted glass; and a ceiling formerly adorned with the Assumption, or rather the *presumption*, of Chancellor Jeffreys, to whom it belonged; but a very judicious fire hurried him somewhere else." Jeffreys was created a baronet—Sir George Jeffreys of Bulstrode—in 1681, and he was visited here by James II. Bulstrode passed to the Chancellor's son-in-law, Charles Dive,

and the old house was pulled down in this century, after it had changed hands several times.

The "Bloody Assize," or "Jeffreys' Campaign," as King James called it, in which the unfortunate followers of the unlucky Duke of Monmouth were so cruelly punished, was held in 1685, and it is possible that Jeffreys built his house at Bulstrode out of the ill-gotten gains which he gathered in from bribes and fines in the west country.

Let us turn to happier days at Bulstrode than when this monster lived there. Mrs. Montague of "The Letters," in her maiden days, as Elizabeth Robinson, here visited her friend, Margaret, Duchess of Portland, the daughter of the second Earl of Oxford. The two ladies became acquainted at Wimpole, in Cambridgeshire, the residence of Lord Oxford, as Miss Robinson's parents lived in the same neighbourhood. When Lady Margaret Harley married and went to live at Bulstrode, she invited her young friend to stay with her, and the visit lasted for about two years, beginning in October, 1741. Miss Robinson thus describes Bulstrode to her sister:—

"We arrived on Sunday at the most charming place I ever saw; a very magnificent house, fine gardens, and a beautiful park. A part of the apartment I inhabit could make you and

me a very comfortable house in the state of our virginity, when we are poor old maidens."

She also enlarged on the pleasures of her life here in a letter to Mr. Freind:—

"The agreeable freedom I live in, and the rural beauties of the place, would persuade me that I was in the plains of Arcadia; but the magnificence of the building, under whose gilded roofs I dwell, has a pomp far beyond pastoral."

Twelve years afterwards she still keeps up her interest in this pretty Buckinghamshire park, for she writes to Gilbert West in 1753:—

"I believe the menagerie at Bulstrode is exceedingly well worth seeing, for the Duchess of Portland is as eager in collecting animals as if she foresaw another deluge, and was assembling every creature after its kind to preserve the species."

In the park is an ancient earthwork, which may have been the early home of the Bulstrodes.

The present house is quite modern, and was built by Edward Duke of Somerset, the mathematical Duke, who died at the age of eighty-one, in 1885. The church, in Byzantine style, which stands on the common at Gerrard's Cross just outside the park, is also modern. It was erected in 1862 from designs by Sir William

Tite, and seems perhaps a little out of place in an English village. At The Ranche, close by, lived Captain Mayne Reid, the popular writer of stories for boys, who died in 1883. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister in Ireland, and was intended for the ministry himself, but found his way into the United States army.

Leaving Bulstrode, we turn westward, and climbing higher up the hills, reach the little town of Beaconsfield which stands on flat table-land. As we enter the town we see on the right-hand side Wilton Park. Here lived Mr. James Du Pré, who died in 1870 at the age of ninety-two, and had in the year 1802 a curious experience of a borough contest in the days of bribery. The borough in question was Aylesbury, and it was soon discovered that the candidate had not distributed the usual "benevolences" amongst the free and independent electors. Accordingly, to his astonishment, he found the members of his own party engaged one day in carrying out a funeral procession, which they stated was that of their deceased candidate. Mr. Du Pré was obliged to give way against his will, and as "benevolences" were the rule, or almost the rule, in those times, distributed the next day what was on this occasion called "resurrection money" to the amount of three guineas a head. It is need-

less to say that he was returned at the top of the poll.

We take a look at the pretty park as we pass, and then go on into the little town, which contains, including the outlying portions of the parish, less than two thousand inhabitants. We find that it chiefly consists of two very broad streets, which are lined by ancient and pleasant-looking houses. At the crossing stands the church, which has a tower of the fifteenth century, adorned with lofty pinnacles at the angles. We enter the church to find the grave of Edmund Burke. It is said to be in the south aisle, where there is on the wall a slab with inscriptions to himself and his son, his brother Richard, and his wife Mary. A brass plate with an inscription, now in the centre of the nave, appears to have been removed from its proper position over the grave.

Burke's connection with Buckinghamshire began in his early political life, for he became member for Wendover in 1765, when he was thirty-five years of age. Three years later he purchased the estate of Gregories, at Beaconsfield, for £23,000, a large sum to be paid by a man whose means were very limited. A portion of the purchase-money was his own, part came from William Burke, and it is probable that the remainder was provided by Burke's patron,

the Marquis of Rockingham, to be repaid at a future time, which future never came. It is said that later on in his career a peerage was on the point of being offered to him, and that he would have taken the title of Lord Burke of Beaconsfield. But his health was declining, and he was completely broken by the death of his only son, which event occurred in 1794. Three years later the body of the father was laid beside that of the younger man. There was a large gathering of distinguished persons in Beaconsfield Church at the funeral of the great orator, for the pall-bearers were the Duke of Portland, Earl Fitzwilliam, the Right Hon. William Wyndham, Lord Chancellor Loughborough, Addington, Speaker of the House of Commons, the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of Inchiquin, and Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto.

Another distinguished man lies outside Beaconsfield Church, for on the south-east side of the churchyard we see the large and tasteless monument of Edmund Waller, the poet. It is in the form of a lofty pyramid, with four funereal urns at the corners, and the whole rests on a square block over which is draped a pall in black marble.

On the west side of the church we see the picturesque remains of the old rectory, a timber-

framed house in black and white. William Barons, who was Master of the Rolls in 1502, and who negotiated the marriage treaty between Prince Arthur and Katharine of Arragon, and succeeded Warham as Bishop of London in 1504, was Rector of Beaconsfield.

There is not much to see besides the church in the town itself, so we will pass out to look at the houses, or rather the sites of the houses, of the two men whose tombs we have just now visited. The country close round Beaconsfield is not particularly beautiful in itself, for the town stands in the middle of a level though elevated plain, and consequently the three parks which surround it, Wilton, Gregories, and Hall Barns, are all somewhat flat. Gregories, sometimes called Butler's Court, lies to the north-west of the town. Of the house once occupied by Burke nothing is left, but a large shapeless mound marks its site. It was burnt down in 1813. Behind, however, still stand, in ruins, the stables. They are overhung by a cedar and a magnificent chestnut. Dark fir woods back them up. It is a gloomy corner of the park, which is moreover just here cut up into small closes. Hither Burke returned from Bath to die. The few years which had elapsed since the death of his son had been

a time of depression and gloom. It is said that he could never bear even to look towards the church where his hopes lay buried, and when driving to London he went round by a side lane to avoid passing beneath its shadow.

In happier days he had received at Gregories Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Upon one occasion the latter happened to go with his host into the house of his bailiff, Mr. Rolfe. The President of the Royal Academy noticed a remarkably fine child sprawling on the floor, and obtained permission to immortalize young Rolfe as the model for his well-known "Infant Hercules."

Due south of the town we find Hall Barns, where lived Edmund Waller, who was born at Coleshill, an outlying part of Hertfordshire immediately to the north of Beaconsfield, in 1605, but did not take up his residence here in the house which he built for himself, until the time of the Commonwealth. From the age of sixteen, as he has told us, until extreme old age, he frequently sat in Parliament as member for the Buckinghamshire boroughs of Amersham or High Wycombe. One can hardly say that there is anything of local colouring in Waller's poems. In those days our poets did not often draw their imagery from the surrounding natural scenery. Milton was perhaps an ex-

ception. We shall have opportunity of examining into that question when we arrive at the house of the great poet at Horton. His eyes had been closed to the beauties of nature for many years at the time of his second sojourn in Buckinghamshire, at Chalfont.

The present house at Hall Barns is almost altogether modern. The oldest part is the entrance hall. We, however, find here some traces of Waller. An obelisk which he put up to commemorate the completion of the beech avenue, bears on it an inscription which states that a former Waller took prisoner at Agincourt Charles, Duke of Orleans, who was brought to England by his captor and lived with him at Groomsbridge. The poet evidently delighted in finding incidents in his family history. A relic connected with Edmund Burke is also preserved at the modern Hall Barns, it is the dagger, supposed to be of foreign manufacture, which the orator flung down on the floor of the House of Commons. He had been speaking about the French Revolution and its dangers. "We must keep, sir," he said, "French daggers from our throats." As he spoke he flung the weapon, with which he had provided himself, from his hand. He intended the action to be tragic, but Sheridan, alas! turned it into comedy. "The honourable member has

brought the knife," exclaimed the wit, "but where is the fork?"

North of Beaconsfield the ground rises considerably, and about three miles from the town we come to the village of Penn, which occupies a high point overlooking the valley of the Wyck. From this village the family of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, took its name, and in the Perpendicular church we find monuments and brasses of that family and of those of Curzon and Rok. Richard, Earl Howe, one of our greatest naval officers, and the victor in the famous fight on "the glorious first of June," 1794, has left his name at Penn. His daughter, Sophia, who inherited her father's title, which was a creation passing through females in defect of male heirs, married into the Curzon family of Penn Howe, which we may see a little farther to the north. The Curzons had succeeded the Penn family by the marriage of Sir Nathaniel Curzon with the heiress of the Penns. We shall have more to do with William Penn the Quaker when we come to the Chalfonts. The house is an ancient one of brick.

We have now explored the western slopes of the Hundred of Burnham, and have reached the highest ground. From the tower of Penn Church it is said that not only Windsor Castle

but portions of twelve counties can be seen. We are now going to cross the hills eastward and make our way to the pretty valleys which run down the eastern sides of the hills to the borders of the county and the river Coln.

CHAPTER V.

THE VALLEY OF THE MISBOURN.

Course of the Misbourn—Amersham—Market-house, Church, and Monuments—Bishop Grey—Walter d'Agmondesham—Edmund Waller—Algernon Sidney—Shardeloes—Chalfont—The Vache, Gardyners, and Fleetwoods—Sir Thomas Clayton—Bishop Hare—Sir Hugh Palliser—Church of St. Giles—Oliver Cromwell—John Milton—Thomas Ellwood—Horace Walpole—The Grove—Jordans Meeting House—William Penn—The Grange—Isaac Penington.

We now pass over the hills which hem in Beaconsfield on the north, and make for the pretty valley of the Misbourn which runs through the centre of the upper portion of the Hundred of Burnham. This is one of those pleasant streams of which we find so many a one flowing—

"Through quiet meadows 'round the mill,"

as we cross and recross the Chiltern hills. It is also the most important, for it rises on the high ground near Hampden, and has a comparatively long course for a wholly Buckinghamshire river before it joins the Coln at Denham. The valley itself is green with many a

meadow and park, and is bordered by beech-clothed hills.

We come, when we have passed Coleshill and the birthplace of Edmund Waller, to the quiet little town of Amersham, or as it was once called, Agmondesham. These hill-towns of South Buckinghamshire are all alike in this, that they consist mainly of one long wide street, which is often planted with trees. There is also usually a cross street of considerably less length. In the centre of the town and extending half-way across the broad street stands a red-brick market-house of the date 1682, with open arcades below, and a curious turret rising above its tiled roof. Turning round to the north at the market-house, we come to the church, rather a fine building, the exterior symmetry of which has, however, been sadly marred by the addition on the north side of a huge burial chamber which stretches out beyond the east end of the chancel.

Within we find that the church is full of the monuments of the Drakes of Shardeloes. We shall walk on to Shardeloes Park when we have finished with the town. We first look at those monuments which are in the chancel, which portion of the church is lofty and lighted by clerestory windows on the south side. The Drake monuments date from 1623. Amongst

them, however, is that of a member of another family, and a very curious monument it is. It represents a boy of fourteen, Henry Curwen, who belonged to an old family at Workington, in Cumberland, and who died at the Rectory House in 1636, while a pupil of Dr. Croke, the

The Market House, Amersham.

Rector. The figure is that of a thin and long-faced individual who stands, clad in a dressing gown, in a sort of closet, with his hand resting on a globe. The poor boy looks as if he might have died from overwork while in the Doctor's hands. The sculptor of this remarkable and melancholy looking figure was Edward Mar-

shall, and the date of the work is 1638. On each side, against the wall, stand many representations of departed Drakes, some of them in the huge wigs of the time of William III. A door in the north wall of the chancel leads to the chapel or burial chamber which we have already mentioned. This also is filled with monuments of the same family. The largest is by Scheemacher. It was erected to Montague Drake, who died in 1728. The figures and cherubim are good examples of the art of the day. A more pleasing monument is a figure by Weekes, the Academician, of the date 1834. Beyond this chapel, and still farther to the north, is the vestry, a large building, which also contains many monuments of the Drakes. But amongst these examples of sepulchral monuments, we must not fail to take notice of the west window of the chancel, which contains figures of Apostles and Evangelists, and is a curious and interesting specimen of the stained glass of 1610. It was removed here from Lamer Manor House, in Hertfordshire, in 1761. Those who take an interest in brasses also will notice many to members of the family of Brudenel, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

William Grey, a distinguished Bishop of Ely, was Rector of Amersham about the year

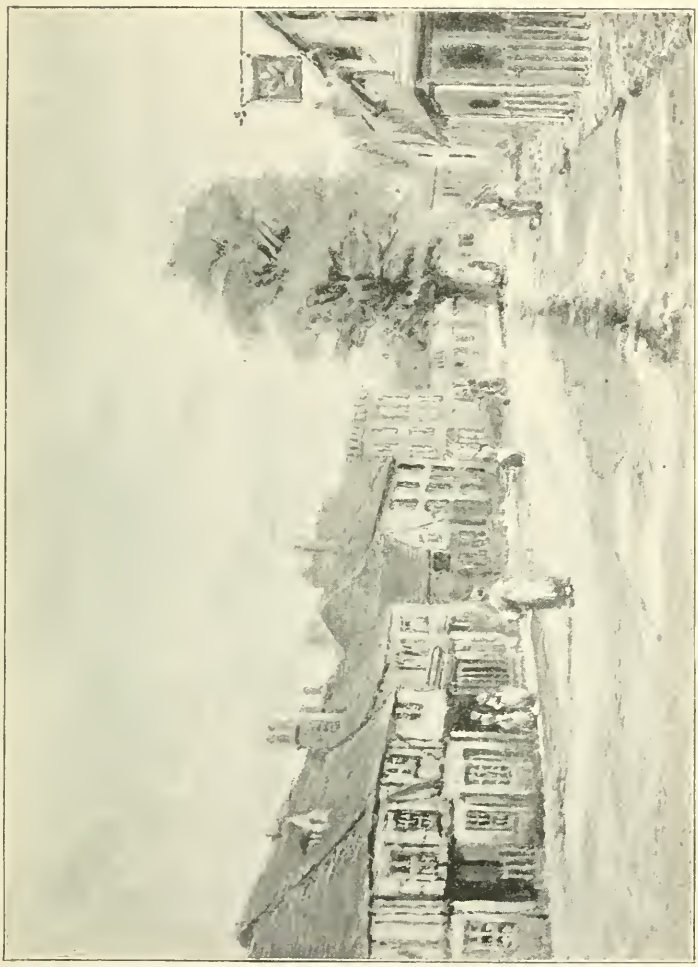
1437. He was also High Treasurer of England, and died at the Episcopal Palace at Downham, in the Isle of Ely, in 1748, having done much towards the improvement and restoration of his Cathedral Church. At Hanger Hill, in the year 1713, died Thomas Ellwood, the friend of John Milton, whom we shall come across again at Chalfont. Walter de Agmondesham, who was Chancellor of England and was appointed by Edward I. to settle, in conjunction with the Bishop of Caithness, the rights of the various claimants for the crown of Scotland after the death of the Maid of Norway, was a native of this place. So also was John of Amersham, a monk of St. Albans, and a great friend of the famous Abbot Wheathamstead. He is described by Fuller in his "Worthies," as "pious, painful, and a profound scholar."

Edmund Waller was baptized in Amersham Church on the 9th of March, 1605, and, as we have noticed, states that he sat for the Borough at the age of sixteen! Algernon Sidney, the brother of Dorothy Sidney the Poet's "Saccharissa," also sat for Amersham not many years before his execution in 1683.

We go on up the street westward, passing many an old house on our way. On our left we see some picturesque alms-houses, surrounding a little court, which were built, as an

inscription over the gate informs us, in the year 1657 by Sir William Drake. Farther on, and on the same side of the road, we pass a curious gabled-house, the last one in the street, which is called Little Shardeloes. A mile farther we come to Shardeloes Park, which runs high up on to the hills. At the foot of the hill stands the mansion, which was designed by Adams. It has a large portico with a pediment, and small square windows in the fashion of the middle part of the last century, which were so much affected by the builders of the "Adelphi." Theirs was not a cheerful style of architecture, and the valley of the Misbourn deserves larger windows through which to look out on its beauties. The grounds were laid out by another much employed designer of the time, Richmond. An older Manor House at Shardeloes was the occasional residence of Queen Elizabeth.

There are two interesting villages farther down the valley, those of Chalfont St. Giles and Chalfont St. Peter. Chalfont St. Giles is about three miles from Amersham, and as we approach the village we see on the left hand the large park known as The Vache. Here lived the family of De la Vache, who also had property in Oxfordshire and elsewhere, but of whom we find traces on this spot from at least



Chalfont St. Giles.

the middle of the fourteenth century. In 1505, however, the Chalfont property was sold to the Crayfords, and a few years afterwards the Crayfords sold it to William Gardyner. The son of this William Gardyner married the heiress of the other principal estate in Chalfont—the Grove—and the family thus became the chief landowners in the parish. In 1564, however, The Vache was sold to Thomas Fleetwood, Master of the Mint, and the Gardyners henceforth resided at The Grove.

We have now come to the Fleetwoods, a family better known than their predecessors, the Gardyners, for Charles Fleetwood, great-grandson of the purchaser of The Vache, married, about 1553, Bridget, daughter of Oliver Cromwell and widow of General Ireton, and became General of the Parliamentary army, and afterwards Lord Deputy of Ireland. His elder half-brother George was also an officer in the forces of the Parliament, and was one of those who signed the death-warrant of Charles I. He was, after the Restoration, brought to trial and pleaded guilty. With great difficulty his life was saved, and he retired to New England, where he died.

But it was a younger branch of the Fleetwoods which was more particularly connected with Chalfont, for the fifth son of Thomas, the

founder of the family here in Buckinghamshire, succeeded his father at The Vache. This son, who was the first Sir George Fleetwood, had a grandson, also named George, and like his cousin, the George whom we mentioned before, a distinguished Puritan officer and a regicide. He also was tried for high treason in 1661, and escaped with difficulty.

William, the seventh and youngest son of the first Sir George Fleetwood, was a Royalist. He acted as Chaplain to the King's army, and was entrusted with the care of the young princes, Charles and James, at the battle of Edgehill. After the Restoration he was made Chaplain to Charles II. He was presented to the rectory of Denham, the next parish to Chalfont, in 1669, and also became Provost of King's College, Cambridge. Finally he was consecrated Bishop of Worcester in 1675. There he died, in 1683, at the age of eighty-one.

A rector of Amersham, Benjamin Robertshaw, has inserted some notes about the Puritan families in his neighbourhood in his register, where we read as follows:—

"1655. October ye 12. Edward Cutler, the late Register then died, and was buried the 14th day of the same month."

"October ye 19th. Paul Ford was then

lawfully elected Register, and sworne by ffrancis Russell, Esqe., Justice of the Peace, the 20th of the same month. This Francis Russell lived at ye Hill Farm, in ye Parish of Chalfont St. Giles, and on ye confines of this Parish: he was one of Oliver's Justices, and a fit man for ye times. I knew his son, a kind of Non. Con., who came to poverty and sold ye Farm. General Fleetwood lived at Ye Vache, and Russell on ye opposite Hill, and Mrs. Cromwell, Oliver's Wife, and her daughters, at Woodrow, High House, where afterwards lived Captain James Thompson, so ye whole country was kept in awe, and became exceeding zealous and very fanatical, nor is ye poison yet eradicated. But ye Whartons are gone, and ye Hampdens agoing.—B. R. 1730." There is a little doubt as to whether "Wharton" is the last name but one to be read, for the register is not just here very legible.

The rebellion of the second George Fleetwood brought to an end the connection of his family with The Vache. Although his life was spared, the estates were confiscated and given to the King's brother, the Duke of York, who sold them to Sir Thomas Clayton, Warden of Merton College at Oxford, who was related by marriage to the Fleetwoods. Sir Thomas Clayton was in principle more like William

than George Fleetwood, for, while residing at The Vache, he made himself very zealous, as a magistrate, against the Quakers, who were at that time in the habit of meeting at The Grange. He was appointed Warden of Merton in 1660, and died at The Vache on the 4th of October, 1693, but was "buried on the 8th of October near the body of his sometime Lady, in a little vault of bricks, under the Belfrey or Tower" of his College Chapel. He was succeeded by his son, James Clayton, who, dying in 1714, left the estate to his wife, and she passed it on to her niece, Margaret Alston, who married Francis Hare, Dean of St. Paul's and Bishop of Chichester, and thus brought a new family to The Vache. Dr. Hare had been chaplain to the Duke of Marlborough, and had been present at the battles of Blenheim and Ramillies. He died in 1740, and was laid in a burial-place constructed on the south side of the church. In 1771 The Vache was sold by the Hares to a distinguished naval officer, Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser, who was one of the principals in a serious professional dispute in the last century. Sir Hugh and his brother admiral, Keppel, quarrelled as to the conduct of the former in their attack on the French fleet off Ushant in 1778, and as they were both in Parliament, naval tactics and political ques-

tions were mixed up together. A court-martial was held on Keppel, but after a trial of thirty-two days he was acquitted, and the mob in London, with whom he was the hero, attacked and raided Sir Hugh Palliser's house in Pall Mall. The monument at The Vache to the memory of Captain Cooke, the famous navigator and discoverer, was erected by Sir Hugh.

There is now nothing old left about the mansion, famous though it is on account of its former occupants, so we will pass on into the village, and to the church, the history of which, as well as that of the parish, has been written by the Rector, the Rev. P. W. Phipps. It is a very interesting building both in itself and for the monuments which it contains. Many of these have to do with the families who in turn owned The Vache. The walls, we notice, are composed of flint stones and blocks of chalk or clunch, for we are still on the borders of the downs, and there is perhaps some connection between the first half of the name Chalfont and the British *chilt*. We can find remains of Norman work here and there, but much has been cut away when the building was remodelled in Decorated and Perpendicular times. On the walls are remains of frescoes, which have, however, been partly covered over by later paintings. For instance, the Ten

Commandments have been painted across a fresco above the chancel arch, and we may find portions of texts which have covered the earlier pictures in other places as well. The frescoes are chiefly along the southern side. Near the chantry chapel of the Gardyner family of The Grove we see the Blessed Virgin delivering a soul from purgatory, which is represented somewhat in the form of a baker's oven. Near the south door is a representation of the Crucifixion, and beyond this are some groups which are supposed to represent the daughter of Herodias first dancing in front of a banqueting table, and then carrying the head of the Baptist in the charger. We may notice that the young lady is represented as standing on her head and kicking her nether limbs in the air. This was a favourite attitude with mediæval artists in which to represent this dancing girl who was supposed to have amused King Herod and his court with the antics of a tumbler at a fair. From the net head-dresses and other peculiarities of the costumes of the female figures, it is probable that these pictures are of about the middle of the fourteenth century, the date of the rebuilding of this south aisle. The fittings in the church are of various dates. There is a Norman font with square base and basin, connected by a stout circular central column.

The four corner shafts of marble are restorations, but a portion of one of the original ones was afterwards discovered buried in a wall. The alms-box, supported on a baluster shaft, is of Jacobean work, and the Holy Table, which now stands in the vestry, is of the same date. The altar rails, of fine old oak, with richly carved foliage instead of balusters, were the gift of Bishop Hare. They are said to have come from St. Paul's, for Dr. Hare was, as we have said, Dean of that cathedral. The church was completely, perhaps almost too completely, restored by Sir G. E. Street, R.A., from 1861 to 1867, when some of the later windows, which marked points in the history of the building, were taken out, and some of the old monuments destroyed.

It is time to pass on to these monuments. There are many old brasses, one of which is a Palimpsest, such as that which we noticed at Hedgerley. It was first used for Thomas and Ann Bredham in 1521, and then employed to commemorate John Salter and Elizabeth his wife in 1626. Those of the Gardyner family are to be found at the east end of the south aisle. Here we have William Gardyner, together with his wife Anne, who was one of the family of Newdigate from Harefield, not far off, and their five sons and three daughters, a

very interesting and well-engraved set of effigies. It is of the date 1558. Then we come, in the chancel, to the altar-tomb of Thomas Fleetwood, his two wives, and his eighteen children. This was the Fleetwood who purchased The Vache from the Gardyners in 1564. There is also in the chancel the slab of the monument of James Clayton, the son of Thomas Clayton the Warden of Merton College. This is the tomb which was broken up at the restoration in 1861. We have to hunt about in the vestry and elsewhere for its fragments. It was probably a fine example of early eighteenth-century work, for James Clayton died in 1714. The Fleetwoods' tomb opposite was also on the point of being removed!

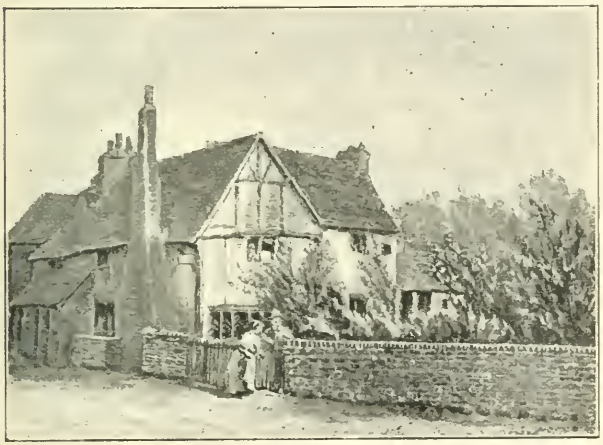
There had been other destroyers of the church before these iconoclasts of our own day appeared, for Oliver Cromwell once visited Chalfont, and resided at Stone House, then occupied by the family of Radcliffe. He was not unaccompanied, and the soldiers who were with him, and who were encamped in the Silsden Meadow, close to the church, amused themselves by firing at the sacred building. Their target was the east window of the chancel, which still bears marks of ill-usage, and the balls which the Roundheads discharged

have, some of them, been found embedded in the oaken roof.

But we have not yet mentioned the most distinguished name which we may connect with Chalfont St. Giles. We leave the church, and, passing up the village street, presently arrive at a small, timber-framed house, some few hundred years old. Here it was that John Milton came to live for a few months in the year 1665, soon after his marriage with his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, and when he was about fifty-seven years of age. The house has been altered since the days of the poet. A porch which ran up to the first floor was taken down about fifty years ago, and the large chimney which abuts on the street has been rebuilt. The large window of the principal room still remains, however, probably in the same state in which it was when the blind poet may have sat there to bask in the sun, for this is the apartment traditionally known as "Milton's Room." Some of the old fittings still remain in the house, as, for instance, in the room on the other side of the entrance, where we may see an old wooden mantel-piece.

Milton came to this retired Buckinghamshire village when anxious to be away from London on account of the plague; but he had a reason for choosing this particular spot. Thomas

Ellwood, the Quaker, his young reader and pupil, was at the time living at Chalfont, and the poet requested him to find him a lodging in the village. Ellwood has himself given us an account of the visit to Chalfont, and of his first reading of "Paradise Lost," and his sug-



Milton's House, Chalfont.

gestion that there should also be a "Paradise Regained."

"Some little time before I went to Aylesbury Prison," he writes, "I was desired by my *quondam* master, Milton, to take a house for him in the neighbourhood where I dwelt, that he might go out of the city for the safety of himself and his family; the pestilence in 1665

then growing hot in London. I took a pretty box for him in St. Giles's, Chalfont, a mile from me, of which I gave him notice. Being now released and returned home, I soon made a visit to him, to welcome him into the country. After some common discourse had passed between us, he called for a manuscript of his, which, being brought, he delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me, and read it at my leisure, and when I had so done, return it to him, with my judgment thereupon. When I came home, and had set myself to read it, I found that it was that excellent poem which he entitled 'Paradise Lost.' After I had, with the best attention, read it through, I made him another visit, and returned him his book, with due acknowledgment of the favour he had done me. He asked me how I liked, and what I thought of it; which I modestly, but freely, told him—and after some further discourse about it, I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much here of Paradise Lost; but what hast thou to say to Paradise Found?' He made me no answer, but sat some time in a muse; then broke off that discourse, and fell upon another subject. After the sickness was over, and the city well cleansed, and become safely habitable again, he returned thither; and when afterwards I went to wait on him

there, he showed his second poem, called 'Paradise Regained,' and, in a pleasant tone, said to me, 'This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had no thought of.'"

There was dread of the terrible pestilence even in this healthy village—and more than dread, suspicion also, for we read entries in the parish register for the year 1665 to the following effect:—"Aug. 26th. A stranger was buried out of ye Vatch ffamily, suppost to die of ye Plague." And, "Sept. 3rd. John, ye son of Obadiah Heywood, was buried, 'tis suppos'd he died of ye sickness."

About a hundred years later another writer, but of very different character to Milton, paid occasional visits to these villages, for Horace Walpole at times came to stay with his brother-in-law, Charles Churchill, at Chalfont House, and has left an account of many places in the neighbourhood, written in his delightful chatty fashion. General Churchill's house was on the London side of Chalfont St. Peter.

Nearly half-way between the two Chalfonts is The Grove, to which, as we have seen, the Gardyners removed after the sale of The Vache. The house is, however, quite modern. Behind The Grove, about a mile to the west, and situated in a pretty little coombe, we find an

interesting place, the old Quakers' Meeting House and Burial Ground, called Jordans. Here, amongst the graves of many of "The Friends," we find those of Isaac Penington, who died in 1679; of Thomas Ellwood, who died at Hanger Hill, near Amersham, in 1713; and of the chief man amongst the Quakers of those days, William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, who died at Ruscombe, near Twyford, in Berkshire, in 1718. His two wives and five of his children also lie here. William Penn does not seem to have had any fixed abode in this part of Buckinghamshire, but in 1672, after his first marriage, he settled at Rickmansworth, which is on the borders of Hertfordshire, and only a few miles distant on the other side of the Coln. From this place he would be able to visit his friends and relations at Chalfont.

Let us go on to The Grange, which lies just on the other side of the village of Chalfont St. Peter. The church of St. Peter need not detain us long on our way. It is a red-brick erection of the last century, which contains, however, some early brasses removed from the old church. The Grange we find to be a modern house, but memories of the Quakers of the time of Charles II. cluster round it. It was the abode of Alderman Penington, who

was one of the judges of Charles I., but it was given up by the Alderman to his son Isaac at the time of the marriage of the latter with Lady Springett, the widow of Sir W. Springett. William Penn's first wife was the daughter of Lady Springett by her first husband—hence his connection with Chalfont, and probably his

Jordans Meeting House.

settlement at Rickmansworth. To The Grange came also Thomas Ellwood, and hither, perhaps, Milton occasionally came while living in the "pretty box" at Chalfont St. Giles.

Isaac Penington and Thomas Ellwood suffered considerably for their opinions. We have already read that Ellwood records that he was

unable to visit Milton when the latter first arrived at Chalfont, on account of his enforced sojourn in Aylesbury gaol. He had been, with several others, attending the funeral of a Quaker at Amersham, when the party was suddenly arrested by a magistrate, one Ambrose Bennett, who was on his way to Aylesbury Sessions. Ellwood was after a time released, but Penington and others remained in prison. Isaac Penington, it seems, never returned to The Grange at Chalfont. The house had, after the confiscation of his father's estates on account of the part which the Alderman had taken in the trial of the King, been given by Charles II. to the Duke of Grafton, and the son had only been allowed to remain there on sufferance. During his imprisonment his wife and children were ejected.

At Denham the Misbourn joins the Coln, but we will leave that place for a future excursion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VALLEY OF THE CHESS.

Chesham Church and Monuments—Source of the Chess—The Bury—Chesham Bois—Latimers—Horace Walpole's Account of the Place—The Church—Chenies—The Village Green—The Manor-House—John Russell—His Exploits and his Honours—The Church—The Russell Chapel—Effigies and Historical Groups—The Earls and the First Duke—Lord William Russell—Other Monuments and Brasses.

The little river Chess, whose valley we are now about to enter, has but a short course. It rises in the high ground above Chesham, and enters the Colu at Rickmansworth. But what the valley loses in length it makes up for in beauty, and we shall find round the village of Chenies some of the prettiest woodland and river scenery in the county, the Thames valley only excepted.

We have now arrived at the easternmost border of the Hundred of Burnham, which stretches in a bow shape from the Thames to Hertfordshire, and here, on the edge of the county, we find the little town known as *the Home on the Chess*. Chesham differs from

Beaconsfield and Amersham in appearance, inasmuch as it does not altogether consist of one long street, but is clustered around its handsome church, which stands on a hill almost in the centre. Let us visit the church, for there is not much more to be seen in the town, with the exception of some old houses, unless we are interested in the manufacture of chairs and other articles formed from the wood of the beech-trees which grow so plentifully all around. We enter by a fine Decorated south porch, and find ourselves in a building not only architecturally interesting, but also containing many monuments well worth notice. A sort of south transept is the burial place of the family of Cavendish of Latimers, and the archway into the chancel has been bricked up. In this chapel we see the tomb of Sir John Cavendish, son of the Earl of Devon, a good example of early seventeenth-century style, and decorated according to the taste of the period with emblems of death, such as spade, scythe, and sculls, bound together by a tangled ribbon. This monument of 1618 contrasts very well with one of rather more than a hundred years' later date, which stands close by. This last is to the memory of Mary, wife of Sir Thomas Whichcote, who died in 1728. The artistic instinct in this case does not run

beyond a tall meaningless pyramid, with a medallion of the lady inserted at the base. In the chancel we can also compare monuments of different dates. Note, for instance, the coloured effigy of Richard Woodcock, represented preaching in his pulpit, and contrast this work of 1623 with a mourning figure, by Bacon, on the monument to Nicholas Skottowe and Grace his wife, who died in 1798 and 1792 respectively. There is more life and vigour about the quaintly conceived representation of the parson than there is about the cold classical correctness of the work of the later sculptor. Then, for a different style of work, look at the mural tablet to Richard Bowle, who died in 1626, and note its coloured and well-worked frame.

When we have finished with the church and its monuments, we shall perhaps stroll out of the town into the Bury Park, and look for the sources of the Chess amongst the watercress beds which fill the bottom of the valley. The stream rises with great force out of the chalk, and is able very soon to begin its work of turning mill-wheels, in addition to its ornamental duty of forming a lake in the park. The Bury House stands close to the church. It is a red-brick building of about the end of the seventeenth century or a little later, stand-

ing in a good position on the side of the hill.

Passing out of the town southwards, we soon arrive at the outlying chapelry of Chesham Bois, once the property of the family of De Bosco, and afterwards of that of Cheyne. In the much-restored church we find the tomb of Sir John Cheyne, who presented "Judicious" Hooker to the Rectory of Drayton Beauchamp, which is on the other side of Aylesbury.

We go on down the valley past several mills, until we come to a spot where the hills rise a little more steeply, and here we have on the one side Latimers and on the other Chenies. Let us visit the former place first. The house at Latimers stands pleasantly in the pretty park which runs down to the river, here dammed up so as to form a lake. Its stands on the site of a former mansion to which Charles I. was brought as a prisoner by the army. His son also slept here for a night when escaping to the Continent. Horace Walpole has given us some description of the old house and its surroundings. He writes on the 28th September, 1749, to his friend Mr. Montague, of a visit which he had been making to Harry Conway at Latimers. "This house which they have hired is large, and bad, and old, but of a bad age; finely situated on a hill in a beech-wood,

with a river at the bottom, and a range of hills and woods on the opposite side, belonging to the Duke Bedford. They are fond of it. The view is melancholy." He was at Latimers again six years afterwards, but was not much better pleased with the place, for he writes, "I have lived here formerly with Mr. Conway, but it is much improved since; yet the river stops short at an hundred yards just under your eye, and the house has undergone Batty-Langley discipline; half of the ornaments are of his bastard Gothic, and half of Hallett's mongrel Chinese. I want to write over the doors of most modern edifices, 'Repaired and beautified, Langley and Hallett, Churchwardens.' The great dining-room is hung with the paper of my staircase, but not shaded properly like mine."

The church stands near the house. It has suffered much from restorers, and there is hardly anything left of the old building. In 1749 Benjamin Hynmers left money for its repair, and it has been almost rebuilt since then. There are several good modern stained-glass windows, one of which is to the memory of Rector Burgess, who was for thirty-two years at Latimers and the next parish Flaunden, which is in Hertfordshire. The window was erected by the clergy of the rural deanery.

There is also a marble block which has on it a long inscription in Latin, in eulogy of an actress named Mary Campion, who died at the age of nineteen, and is here buried. The monument was set up by George Duke of Devonshire.

On the opposite side of the valley we see the woods of Chenies. We leave the river and take a path which runs up through these woods. It leads us to a pretty village green, shadowed by large trees and surrounded by trim cottages. In the centre is a well. The whole place, we cannot fail to notice, is well-cared for. We pass out of the green on the western side, and before us we see the tall twisted chimneys of an ancient manor-house. This is the building which the first Earl of Bedford erected on the site of the old home of the family of Cheyne who had been here and in the neighbourhood for many a year. We may remember that we came across the tomb of Sir John Cheyne at Chesham Bois. The full designation of the parish is Isenshampstead Cheynes, but the place-name has been lost, and that of the family alone remains. We shall look in vain for any features of the older mansion in the ivy-clad building before us. As Leland, writing about the year 1538, tells us :—

"The olde house of the Cheyneis is so trans-

lated by Lord Russell, that hath this house in right of his wife, that little or nothing remaineth untranslated: and a great deal of the house is even newly set up, made of brick and timber, and faire lodgings be new erected in the garden. The house is within divers places richly painted with antique works of white and black." When thus *translated* it became the family residence of the Russells until they took up their abode at Woburn Abbey, but the church, as we shall see, still remains the family burial place.

When the Russells ceased to reside here, the house fell for a time into disrepair; the gardens disappeared, and the place was shorn of its former beauty. Horace Walpole, when he was staying at Latimers with Mr. Conway, in 1749, came over to look at Chenies, and found it in a sad state of dilapidation. "There are but piteous fragments," he says, "of the house remaining, now a farm, built round three sides of a court. It is dropping down in several places without a roof, but in half of the windows are beautiful arms in painted glass. As these are totally neglected, I propose making a push and begging them of the Duke of Bedford. They would be magnificent for Strawberry Castle." Walpole was always prowling about on the look-out for what he might find

wherewith to furnish his house at Twickenham.

But the Russells did not succeed the Cheynes directly. Sir John Cheyne, in 1469, devised the manor of Chenies to his wife Agnes, daughter of Sir William Lexham, and she in turn devised it first to Sir David Philyp and his wife, next to Anne St. Medard, and then to Sir Grey Sapcote. Sir Grey's grand-daughter Anne, the daughter of his son, a second Sir Grey, was left the heiress of her family, and therefore of Chenies. She married three times. Her first husband was Sir John Broughton, the second was Sir Richard Jerningham, and the third was Sir John Russell. The last was a far more remarkable man than his predecessors, in fact, he was one of the foremost men in the country in Tudor times, and we ought to recall a few facts in his life as we stand in front of the house which he built.

It was a happy chance which first brought John Russell to the Court of King Henry VII. His family came originally from Le Rozel, in Normandy, hence their name—though spelling and pronunciation have both been changed—but were at the beginning of the sixteenth century already settled at Barwick, in Dorsetshire. Now it so happened that in the month of January, 1506, Philip, the Archduke

of Austria, son of Maxmilian Emperor of Germany, was together with his bride Joanna, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Castile and Arragon, making his way down the channel towards Spain. Rough weather came on, and the ship which contained the royal pair was, with two others, driven for shelter into the harbour of Weymouth. Sir Thomas Trenchard, governor of the Dorsetshire Coast, went down to meet the distinguished strangers, and invited them to his house at Wolverton. Hither also he invited his young cousin, John Russell, who lived close by, and who had lately returned from a continental tour, supposing that his society would be agreeable to the Archduke and Archduchess. He was not wrong. So acceptable did the young man become to Philip that when the latter went on to Windsor at the request or command of the King, he asked Mr. Russell to accompany him ; and from this time the rise of the latter was an assured fact. We will only just mention some of the points in his career to show that in almost all the important events of the day he had a share. He was present at the Battle of Spurs, and at the taking of Therouenne and Tournay in 1513. He attended, as one of the suite, at the marriage of the Princess Mary Tudor with Louis XII. in 1514. He was one of the splendid royal

retinue on the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. In 1523 he assisted in the attack on Morlaix, in Brittany, and was for his valour on that occasion knighted by the Earl of Surrey. The exploit, however, cost him an eye. Again and again was he sent on important diplomatic missions to the Continent, and he was present as a spectator at the battle of Pavia, on the 23rd February, 1525. In the early part of 1526 he married the heiress of the Sapcotes, and then began his connection with Chenies. In 1527 he was sent on a mission to Rome, and left that city only a short time before it was sacked, on the 6th May, by the troops of Constable Bourbon. He was the friend, first of Wolsey, and then of Thomas Cromwell. He received his reward for his share in the spoliation of the monasteries by the grant of the Abbey of Tavistock in 1540, and that of Woburn in 1550. Before these dates, however, honours had come thickly on him. In 1538 he was created Baron Russell of Chenies. In 1539 he was made a Knight of the Garter. In 1541 he was Lord High Admiral, and in 1550 he became first Earl of Bedford. In 1554 he was one of an embassy to Spain for the purpose of making the final arrangements for the marriage of Philip, the grandson of his earliest patron, and Mary of England; and on the 25th

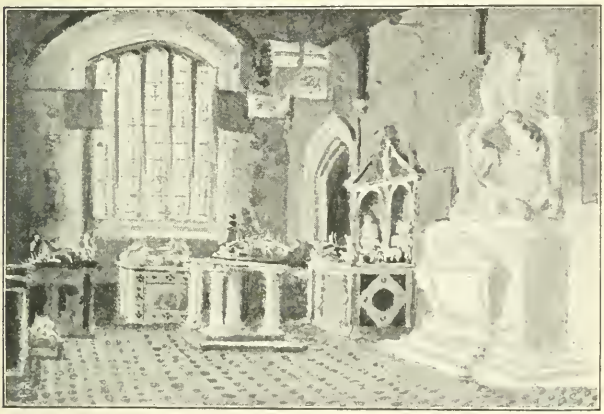
of July in the same year he was one of the group of distinguished noblemen who undertook the duty of presenting their Queen to the bridegroom at her marriage. This was nearly his last public act. On the 14th March, 1555, he died full of years and honours. And so nearly through four eventful reigns, those of Henry VII., of his son, and of two of his grandchildren, John Russell was a conspicuous figure. Prudence, for such we may call it, was his distinguishing characteristic. When the heads of many leading men of his own day were falling around him, he ever remained safe, but not by any means because he was unwilling or unable to take part in public affairs, whatever might be their aspect. He was always to the front, and yet the changes which proved so fatal to many left him scathless and prosperous.

Let us now pass into the church and view the monuments of Earl John and of his descendants. The Church of St. Michael stands close to the Manor-house, and is itself rather an interesting building, but the principal attraction to historian or artist is the large burial-chamber, with vault beneath, which runs along the north side the whole length both of nave and chancel. An inscription over the east window tells us that—"Thys Chapel ys built by Anne, Countess of Bedford, wyfe to John Erle of Bedforde,

according to ye last will of the sayd Erle, A.D. 1556." The Countess herself was laid by the side of her husband in 1557. The chapel contains in all fifteen monuments of Russells, besides an earlier memorial effigy, which it is supposed commemorates some members of the Cheyne family. Coats-of-arms hang on the walls, and from the roof hang banners, many of which are those of Knights of the Garter, brought hither when the stalls above which they floated in the chapel of St. George at Windsor were vacated by the death of the occupants. The east window also is filled with family arms in stained glass.

The earlier monuments are magnificent examples of the very best style of the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, and the effigies in marble and alabaster which lie on the altar-tombs are surpassed by no others in existence for excellence of design and delicacy of detail. Earl John occupies, as is right, the central position beneath the east window. By his side is the Countess Anne, the heiress of the Sapcotes. The Earl is in plate-armour, and round his neck is a collar of roses and monograms. He wears a long beard, and the eyelid droops over the eye which was blinded by the arrow-wound at the siege of Morlaix. The Countess is in ermine robes.

Round the tomb are coats-of-arms, and the often-repeated motto of the family, adopted, it is said, by Earl John, and so fatalist in its meaning, *che sara sara*. The monument was probably executed in Italy, but the face of the Earl is evidently copied from the portrait painted by Holbein, which hangs in Woburn Abbey.



The Russell Chapel, Chenies Church.

This monument to his father and mother was set up by Francis, whose own altar-tomb is on the left hand of that of his parents. Earl Francis had chiefly to do with the affairs of Scotland and with Mary Queen of Scots, and he was present at the baptism of her son, Prince James. In 1570 his own sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, paid

a visit to Chenies. The Earl wrote as follows to Sir William Cecil touching the royal visit: "In your second letter I understand Her Majesty's coming to Chenies; where if the home was sweet, and the lodging commodious, I shall be glad thereof; but as to the soil and seat thereof, as no art nor diligence can amend nature's doings, so am I sorry that it cannot now be amended, if ever it might be for a time, to ease thereby so noble a guest, and so large a train." If Elizabeth was not satisfied with "soil and seat," that is the position of Chenies, she must have been hard to please.

Earl Francis died on the 28th of July, 1585, and his eldest surviving son, also named Francis, had fallen in a border raid at Hexpeth Gate-head the previous day, so that he was succeeded by his grandson. Margaret, his wife, lies by his side. She was doubly connected with Bedfordshire, for she was the daughter of Sir John St. John, of Bletroe Castle in that county, and the widow of Sir John Gostwick, who had been Master-of-the-Horse to Henry VIII. The effigies, both of the Earl and of the Countess, are coloured, and at their heads is a lofty trophy containing arms, crests, and coronets. We may notice that the supporters at the feet of almost all the figures take the form of the white goat—the crest of the family.

On the right-hand of the first Earl is the tomb of his grand-daughter Anne, Countess of Warwick, the daughter of Earl Francis. She was a lady of some note, for she acted as guardian to her young nephew, Earl Edward, who succeeded his grandfather when only eleven years of age, and she was the intimate friend of Queen Elizabeth. She died in 1604, a year after her royal mistress. It was to herself and to her sister, the Countess of Cumberland, that Edmund Spenser dedicated his hymns on "Celestial Love and Beauty." "The two honourable sisters," he calls the ladies, "the most excellent and rare ornaments of all true love and beauty." The effigy, which rests on a slab supported by four columns instead of on a solid base, represents the Countess in scarlet and crimson. In addition to the usual goat, we find on the slab four little cherubim. The monument is, therefore, an example of the manner in which gradually the principal effigy was surrounded by attendant figures, until in the eighteenth century a monument became more or less a synonym for a group.

Immediately at the feet of the Countess of Warwick, almost level with the floor, is the ancient effigy removed from some other part of the church, which is supposed to represent Sir John Cheyne.

In front of the tomb of Earl John, and standing out by itself in the centre of the chapel, is a plain marble slab, without an effigy, standing on four columns. It is to the memory of Lady Frances Bourcher, the daughter of the Countess of Bath, who was herself a Russell, the daughter of Earl Francis, and the sister of the Countess of Warwick and the Countess of Cumberland.

Against the wall and at the feet of the second Earl Francis, is the monument of the fourth Earl of the same name, his grandson, who succeeded his cousin Edward, the third Earl in 1621. This was the Earl who drained so much of the Fens, especially in the neighbourhood of his estates at Thornhaugh or Thorney, under the superintendence of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden the Dutch engineer, who there constructed what is called the Old Bedford River and the Bedford Level. This Earl Francis also took an important part in the public affairs of the first part of the reign of Charles I., and died just before the outbreak of the Civil War. The Earl died of small-pox at Bedford House on the 9th of May, 1641, and was buried at Chenies on the 14th. Three hundred Peers' coaches accompanied the funeral procession of the "wise Earl," as he was called, from London into Buckinghamshire. His

monument is perhaps the most artistic next to that of his great-grandfather, but then there is nothing in the whole chapel which can rival that exquisite piece of work. By the side of his own effigy is that of his Countess Katharine, daughter of Giles Brydges, third Lord Chandos of Sudeley, and above, in a sort of second monument fixed upright against the wall, are representations of their two daughters, Elizabeth, a young maiden, and Frances, a baby. The effigies are coloured, and the whole arrangement wants quiet and repose. For instance, the family goats instead of remaining *couchant* at the feet of the effigies are standing erect. The double character of the monument, with the lower portion in commemoration of the parents and the upper of the daughters, is also distracting. The solid base of the lower portion is, however, in massive grandeur of design, fit to rank with the similar part of the monument of Earl John.

Against the wall on the opposite side of the chapel is the monument of Frances, Lady Chandos, the mother of Countess Katharine.

We now come as we go down the chapel to monuments of a different character. Against the wall, west of the double monument of Earl Francis and his family, is a large white marble group to Wriothesley, the second Duke of Bedford. On the top of a very tasteless sar-

cophagus kneel the Duke and Duchess in flowing robes, and a little cherub looks down on them from the centre of a conventional sun half veiled in clouds. The monument is plain white marble throughout, and was the work of William Chambers in 1711. We are taking the monuments not in their chronological order, but according to the positions in which they are placed, and we see on one side of this monument to Duke Wriothesley a wall tablet to Major-General Lord William Russell, who was Minister Plenipotentiary at Berlin, and who died in 1846; and on the other a tablet to Lady William Russell. These two were father and mother to Hastings, the ninth Duke, who died in 1888, and to Lord Ampthill, who was, as Lord William had been, Ambassador at Berlin, and who died in 1880. There is a tablet to Lord Ampthill close to that of his mother, and opposite is one to his brother, Duke Hastings. There is yet one more modern tablet, which is to the memory of George, the tenth Duke, who died in 1893. It is on the wall opposite to that of his father, Hastings. In front of these, standing detached on the floor of the chapel, is a plain slab supported on pillars and evidently copied from the monument of Lady Chandos, which commemorates the first Earl Russell of the new line, better known

as Lord John Russell, the hero of the Reform Bill of 1831.

We have now arrived at the west end of the chapel, and we find that the whole west wall is taken up by an enormous monument in white marble to William, the first Duke. We must now go back two hundred and fifty years in the history of the Russell family. Duke William was the son of Francis, the fourth Earl, and succeeded to the title in 1641. His father had been, as we have noticed, known by the name of "the wise Earl," and it was expected that the son would step into his father's place in public affairs. He did so for a time, but matters were coming to a crisis between King and Parliament, and public men were ranging themselves on one side or the other. The Earl of Bedford at first joined the Parliamentary party. He was soon given a command under the Earl of Essex, and when actual warfare commenced at Edgehill, he had charge of the reserve of horse in that action, and in this position is said "to have done extraordinary service." But in a year he had come over to the Royalist side, and in 1643 fought for the King at the battle of Newbury. But he never came fairly into range with the Royal party, and during the remainder of the Civil War, and during the Commonwealth, he took no

particularly active part in public affairs. He wanted the steady perseverance of his great ancestor, Earl John, and of his own father. He received King Charles at Woburn, however, in 1644, and again in 1645 and 1647. At the Restoration he was selected to bear the sceptre of St. Edward at the Coronation, and he was made a Knight of the Garter in 1672. He also assisted at the Coronation of William and Mary, and was created first Duke of Bedford in 1694. The venerable Peer, who had lived through as almost stirring times as those of Earl John, died in 1700 at the great age of eighty-seven. His Countess, for she did not live to become a Duchess, who is also represented on the monument, was Lady Anne Carr. She was the daughter of the unhappy Countess of Somerset, the divorced wife of the Earl of Essex, and the worthless Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, the favourite of James I. The future Countess of Bedford was actually born in the Tower of London, where her mother was at the time in custody on suspicion of participation in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. Happily the young lady had been permitted to grow up in ignorance of this dark page in the history of her parents. She did not learn the story until in her old age a pamphlet containing an account of the affair

came by chance into her hands. She read it, was overwhelmed on learning the history of her mother's disgrace, and shortly afterwards died.

But to go back to her early life. She was a newly introduced young beauty of nineteen at the Court of Charles I., when William Russell first met her in 1635, on his return from the continental tour usually undertaken at that time by young men of position. The father of William Russell strongly opposed the match, as was but natural, but the young couple were, notwithstanding, married in 1637.

The monument at which we are gazing is more than a mere collection of portraits. It is meant to tell a story as well. The figures of the father and mother are bowed down with grief, and their faces are convulsed with agony. They turn away from an object which is represented between them, the portrait on a medallion of their son, Lord William Russell, the unfortunate victim of the Duke of York and his brother. The portrait of the Whig hero occupies the principal place, but the portraits of others of the family are on medallions elsewhere on the huge monument. The group may be interesting historically, and as the commemoration of a tragic event, but when we contrast it with the effigies of Earl John and Countess Ann at the other end of the chapel,

so dignified in their calm repose, we cannot hesitate in forming an opinion as to which of the two monuments is the most suitable for this chamber of death.

Horace Walpole of course visited the church as well as the house, when on his visit to Latimers. "I have just seen," he writes, "a collection of tombs like those you describe; the house of Russell robed in alabaster and painted; there are seven monuments in all, one is immense, in marble, cherubimed and seraphimed, for the first Duke of Bedford and his Duchess." Walpole, it will be noted, had not taken account of the date of the Lady's death. The chapel was evidently not as well cared for then as it is now, for the funereal processional helmets were lying about, and Conway put one of them on to his head. "You cannot imagine," says his companion, "how it suited him, how antique and handsome he looked. You would have taken him for Rinaldo."

We have been so long amongst the Russell monuments that we have almost forgotten that there are others in the church. In the chancel are those of former Rectors of many dates, from 1517 and onwards, and against the walls are some brasses of the Cheyne family.

With the memories of departed Russells, and with their pretty village, we finish our tour

through the Hundred of Burnham, for from the high ridge on which Chenies stands we look across the valley of the Chess into Hertfordshire. We have now finished with the Chiltern Hills and their outlying spurs, for the third and last Hundred which we have to visit is contained for the most part in the lowlands on the borders of the Thames and the Colne.

CHAPTER VII.

ETON.

The High Street—Horace Walpole at "The Christopher"—The Old and New Parish Churches—Henry VI. and his Original Foundation—The College—William of Waynflete—Visit of Samuel Pepys—The great Quadrangle—Upper and Lower Schools—Long Chamber and its Inconveniences—The Chapel—Sir Henry Wotton and Sir Henry Saville—Lord Bacon—Francis Ross and Richard Allestree—Lupton's Chantry—The Green Yard—Election Chamber—The Playing Fields—Dr. Keate—Growth of the School.

As we drifted down the Thames on our way from Cliefden, we stayed our boat when we arrived at Boveney and struck inland. We were almost in sight of Eton, and Royal Windsor was certainly standing out well before us. Had we bent our way round one more reach, we should have seen the cupola-shaped turrets—

> "That crown the watery glade
> Where grateful science still adores
> Her Henry's holy shade."

We will suppose that we have regained our boat, and rowing along the course so famous for many a hard struggle or gay procession,

presently arrive at that, it must be confessed, most ugly iron bridge which connects Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, and brings into contact the two most famous places in those counties. We land and pass up the narrow crowded High Street of Eton, and probably because most visitors are sure to do so, make at once for the College. We may note, however, as we pass along, that the little town contains many a picturesque old house, especially near the banks of the river, as well as here and there in the street itself, which latter chiefly constitutes what we may call extra-collegiate Eton. Amongst such buildings we are pretty sure to single out one in particular, though by no means the most ancient, "The Christopher," where every parent is sure to put up if he happens to come down and stay a day or so when he brings his boy, and to which every old Etonian will turn for a comfortable lodging when he comes to revisit his old haunts.

Horace Walpole came down on just such an occasion, expecting to hear an old schoolfellow, Thomas Asheton, now arrived at the dignity of a fellow of the College, preach in the chapel the next day. We must almost apologise for quoting from the delightful gossiping letters so often, but we will not turn to them again while

we are in the Chiltern Hundreds. Mr. Walpole dates his letter to Montagu from "The Christopher," and the very fact of writing down the name causes him at once to go back to the days when he was a boy. "The Christopher," he writes, "Lord! how great I used to think anybody just landed at The Christopher. But here are no boys for me to send for—here I am like Noah just returned into his old world again, with all sorts of queer feels about me. By the way, the clock strikes the old cracked sound—I recollect so much, and remark so little, and want to play about—and am so afraid of my playfellows—and am ready to shirk Asheton—and can't help making *fun* of myself—and envy a dame over the way that has just locked in her boarders, and is going to sit down in a little hot parlour to a very bad supper, so comfortably! and I could be so jolly a dog if I did not *fat*, which, by the way, is the first time the word was ever applicable to me. In short I should be out of all *bounds* if I was to tell you half I feel, how young I am again one minute and how old the next. But do come and feel with me when you will—tomorrow—adieu! If I don't compose myself a little more before Sunday morning when Asheton is to preach, I shall certainly *be in a bill for laughing at church*; but how to help it, to see

him in the pulpit, when the last time I saw him here was standing up funking over against a Conduct to be catechised."

But although we see many an old house we shall look in vain for an ancient parish church. Eton is an old parish, and it had once an old church, but the site of that church is now occupied by the great chapel of the College. The foundation of Henry VI. swallowed up as it were parish, church, and all, and the Provost of Eton was until lately parish priest as well, and his chapel remained until quite recent days the place of worship for the parishioners. It was not until the year 1769 that William Hetherington, one of the Fellows, increased the church accommodation of the place by building a chapel-of-ease, which became more or less the exclusive place of worship for the townspeople. This chapel was rebuilt in 1854, and at length, in the year 1875, ecclesiastical connection between College and town was entirely severed, and the rebuilt chapel-of-ease of the town became an independent parish church, and the College chapel became the religious home of its own community only.

There have been then, we may say, two Etons. First, there was the little collection of houses standing in the meadows beneath the lordly hill of Windsor, a mere village of no

note, for though we have called it a town it has never had a market, much less a mayor and corporation. Then there came the great change, the result of Henry's new foundation, which in time made Eton, the second Eton, what it is, and made the little village to thrive and prosper under the shadow of the College, which remains to the present day the principal landowner in the parish.

But this magnifying of the village of Eton was a matter never contemplated by the royal founder, much less provided for. The idea of a school as part of his foundation was only a secondary consideration with him. Eton as a school, such as we know it to be now and such as it has been known for the last two hundred years, has grown into existence, and this growth was in its beginning quite a chance.

The pious king of humble and feeble mind, the one weak one amongst all the strong race of Plantagenets, had, in the year 1440, emerged from his long minority, and bethought him that he would like to found a college of secular priests, who were to live in community but do active clerical work according to a common enough arrangement of the times. There was nothing at all unusual in the way in which the parish church was made collegiate under the title of "The King's College of our Lady of

Eton," and there was nothing very remarkable in the body which was created, consisting as it did of a Provost, ten "sad" priests, four lay clerks, six choristers, twenty-five poor grammar-scholars, and twenty-five poor men whose duty it was "to pray for the King." When Pope Eugenius IV. ratified these provisions he was probably only doing what he had done in substance for almost precisely similar bodies in scores of instances throughout Europe. But the provision for the small band of grammar-school boys became in time the little leaven which leavened the whole lump in a manner never dreamt of by the King nor by the early rulers of his foundation.

There seems to be no particular reason why this College of secular priests should have been founded at Eton rather than anywhere else. We can only surmise that Henry, looking down one day from the Castle of Windsor in which he had been born nineteen years before, was struck with the thought that a large church with conventual buildings around it would look very well standing in the flat meadows which he saw beneath him on the other side of the river. And so he soon put his project into effect, and the religious establishment arose on the Buckinghamshire side

of the Thames, and had it not been for that clause in the charter of foundation about the five-and-twenty schoolboys, his College might have been suppressed, or destroyed, or absorbed into some larger establishment. Such a fate, indeed, as the last nearly overtook the College in the next reign, when it was proposed to transfer the ecclesiastical body to the Chapter at Windsor. The Yorkist king, Edward IV., did not look, it is probable, with a very favouring eye on the establishment which had been set up by his Lancastrian predecessor. But appeal was made to the Pope, and Provost and Fellows remained undisturbed in their old home. Jane Shore is said to have stood their friend with the King on this occasion.

But as we talk about the origin of the College of our Lady of Eton, we may suppose that we have walked up the High Street until we are immediately under the buildings themselves. On our left we see many new schools and boarding-houses, which probably will concern us not. The attraction is all to our right hand. We pass a spot where a small bridge once crossed a little brook which formed the limit of the College domains. From this point we catch a glimpse of the southern side of the old buildings, but in front

of us, dwarfing all else, rises the lofty chapel. Let us stay a moment as we pass round the western end of that building. We note that a figure of William of Waynflete has lately been most fittingly placed here against the chapel wall. This Prelate and Chancellor had much to do with the early history of the College as Provost, carrying out the intentions of the royal founder, and completing the chapel as we see it now the year after the tragic fate of the unfortunate King. But we have halted at this spot not merely to look at the modern effigy of the Bishop, but to recall the fact that, had the original plan been carried out in its fulness, we should be standing in the centre of the crossing of an enormous church which would have ranked in size with some of the largest of our cathedrals. What we call the chapel is merely the choir of the contemplated building, the transepts of which would have run north and south along the present line of street, while a great nave would have stretched far away over the plot of ground now occupied by the new buildings on the farther side of the road.

We pass a little farther along the street, which is here, on the school side, pleasantly bordered by trees, and pass in at the principal gateway as many visitors have done before, and

as Samuel Pepys did when he went over the College two hundred years ago in the company of Dr. William Child, the organist of St. George's Chapel at Windsor. We shall, however, have the advantage of Pepys, inasmuch as we can have Maxwell Lyte's "History of Eton College" in our hands as we walk round. Nothwithstanding, it will be, perhaps, interesting to read the old diarist's description of the place, and to note how much has remained unchanged since his time.

"At Eton," he writes, "I left my wife in the coach, and he," that is the Doctor, "and I to the College, and there we find all mighty fine. The school good and the custom pretty of boys cutting their names in the shuts of the windows when they go to Cambridge, by which many a one hath lived to see himself a Provost and Fellow that hath his name on the window standing. To the Hall and there find the boys' verses 'De Peste'; it being their custom to make verses at Shrovetide. I read several, and very good they were; better, I think, than ever I made when I was a boy, and in rolls as long and longer than the whole hall by much. Then to the Porter's, in the absence of the Butler, and did drink of the College beer, which is very good; and went into the back fields to see the scholars play. And so to the Chapel,

and there saw, amongst other things, Sir H. Wotton's stone, with this epitaph:—

> 'Hic jacet primus hujus sententiæ Author
> Disputandi pruritus fit ecclesiæ scabies.'

But unfortunately the word 'Author' was wrong writ, and now so basely altered that it disgraces the stone."

Pepys did not copy the inscription quite correctly and has written down the word "author" in English fashion.

But we are not yet in the Chapel, but have only entered the first court or quadrangle of which it forms the southern side. In the centre of the court stands, as is right, a statue of Henry VI. The prevailing style of architecture is red brick, with stone dressings, and the old buildings remind us somewhat of those at Hampton Court. On our right, as we enter, is, however, a cloister of Wren's time, above which is the Upper School, well furnished with names cut on the panelling, as described by Pepys. On the north side is the Lower School, above which is the Long Chamber, famous in former days as the uncomfortable lodging-place of the foundation scholars until the year 1846. The discomforts of this abode have been often described, and we will not go through them again.

But this last-mentioned block of buildings

contains the oldest and original part of the domestic and school arrangements. The ground floor was the first and only school-room, and the boys, the few grammar-scholars, slept as well as studied at the ground level. Above lived the usher and the lay clerks. But it was a roughly-floored building with great chinks between the boards. These chasms were a great inconvenience both to those above and those below. The occupants of the down-stairs rooms were exposed to the danger of a flood from above, and were only too ready to retaliate from that part which was used as a kitchen. Here is an account of some such attack made on those who lived upstairs. It is from the complaint of the last-named against the servants of the French Ambassador who at one time, in the reign of Elizabeth, occupied a part of these buildings. "Whereas," so runs the remonstrance, "their kitchen is under the Usher's chamber, they have sundry times thrust up spits in such places as the boards be not close joined, and also discharged their daggers upon other places of the said boards to the great danger of those that be above; but which of them did it cannot be known, because they that be above cannot see them that be beneath, save that the first of January, about three of the clock at afternoon, one of

them was seen thrust up a spit wherewith he had almost hit a little boy that was in the chamber, and he that did this was in a grey frieze coat or jerkin." This account will give us some idea of the discomforts, which, bar the attacks from below, lasted in part down to the middle of this century in Long Chamber.

The south side of the first quadrangle is almost taken up by the chapel, which is by far the most important building in the College group, rising high above both schools and hall. If figures convey a meaning to any it may be well to mention that it is 173 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 90 feet high. The date of its erection gives us its style, which is Perpendicular. We may compare it with King's College Chapel, Cambridge, Henry's other foundation, but at the same time remember that it was not intended to leave it in the shape and form of a college chapel, where all the members of the society worship together in the choir, but to make it the chancel of a huge church. The Wars of the Roses interfered with these projects, and it was left to William of Waynflete to complete it, in usual college fashion with an ante-chapel, as we see it now, in the reign of Edward IV. Brasses and monuments there are many to Provosts and others. Let us

look at a few of the most remarkable of them, that is remarkable for those whom they commemorate, rather than in themselves.

For instance, we shall note that of Sir Henry Wotton, scholar, poet, ambassador, not to say fisherman and bosom friend of Isaac Walton, who was Provost from 1623 to 1639. We have already referred to his epitaph, which seems to insinuate that Sir Henry was something of a cynic. Such a character is also indicated by his advice to a young diplomatist, which is as follows:—"Speak the truth, and you shall never be believed, and by this means your truth will secure yourself if you shall ever be called to any account; and 'twill put your adversaries, who will still hunt counter, to a loss in all their disquisitions and undertakings." But then his definition of an ambassador had been "Legatus est vir bonus peregre missus ad mentiendum reipublicæ causâ."

Wotton took Deacon's orders when appointed Provost, but his predecessor, Sir Henry Saville, who had been tutor to Elizabeth, had not qualified for his semi-ecclesiastical position in this manner. But layman though he was, he was a great student, and, moreover, set up a printing-press at Eton, with which he produced an edition of the works of St. John Chrysostom

and other books. The press was probably set up somewhere in the College itself.

After the death of Sir Henry Saville in 1622, the great Lord Bacon made an attempt to secure the office of Provost, and applied to the King for the post. But James handed over the nomination to his favourite "Steenie," the Duke of Buckingham, who failed to appoint the great scholar, whereby Eton was probably the loser.

But we are getting away from the chapel and its monuments. Dr. Francis Rous, the Puritan Provost, lies buried here. Here, too, we see the tomb of Richard Allestree, who was the royalist Provost after the Restoration. There is an odd story about his appointment. The King one day challenged his courtiers to produce a man more ugly than himself, and one of them, after a long search, introduced Dr. Allestree to the monarch. Charles, thinking that he ought to do something for the man who had been brought to his notice in so curious a manner, appointed him to Eton. But Provost Allestree is chiefly to be remembered as the builder of the west cloisters and Upper School. He died at Eton in 1680. An earlier Provost, Lupton, who lived in the time of Henry VII., has a little chantry chapel which he shares with Provost Bost, on the

north side near the altar. It contains a magnificent brass of the Provost, and the Lupton *rebus*, a punning device, the word *lup* over a *tun* in the spandrel of the doorway. The mural paintings on each side of the chapel, now covered by the woodwork, are supposed to be of the same date as the chantry. They represent various legends connected with the *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin. The ante-chapel has, we notice, a door and staircase leading into the street. This was for the use of the townspeople during the many years that the chapel was their parish church.

And now we pass on beneath the handsome tower built by Provost Lupton in the early part of the sixteenth century, which divides the two courts, and enter the Green Yard. This inner quadrangle, surrounded by its cloisters, is almost monastic in its character. Here is the hall which is approached by a flight of steps from the southern walk of the cloister, and we observe that the old doorway has been cut away in later days for the purpose of making these stairs less steep. There must have been many an ugly rush down the break-neck steps when the collegers, boy-fashion, hurried away after their dinner. The hall also has been altered from time to time, though it has now been well restored, and its three

fireplaces have been uncovered. It is fitted up according to the usual plan of a dining-hall, with a screen at the lower end, and a daïs or platform at the upper end for the high table. The panels bear the arms of Provosts and other notabilities, and above hang the portaits of a whole host of famous Etonians. If we go outside the hall to the south, we can see how the late Elizabethan or early Jacobean builders added on to the upper portion of the old walls of Henry or Waynflete according to their own style. But, notwithstanding, the building remains much as it was when Henry's Provost, and the Fellows, and the clerks and the grammar-scholars, first sat down to their meals in it, and we may be thankful that both hall and chapel have suffered so little from additions or restorations.

We must not fail to pass through the eastern entrance into the Playing Fields, if it be only for the sake of the glorious view of Windsor Castle which we have from the Buckinghamshire side of the river, or the view of the College buildings if we turn round when we have reached the river's banks. As for what goes on in the Playing Fields, and as for the school-life in general, have not such matters been written in the chronicles of Eton by many different hands?

We will suppose that we have been simply chance visitors, like Samuel Pepys, just walking round quadrangle, chapel, and hall, taking note of such things as we may see in each building, but not diving down deeply into the early history of the College of our Lady of Eton. We have, however, just dwelt sufficiently on that early history to be able to see from what the Eton, as we know it now, arose. The oppidans, or commensals, as they were once called, the outsiders so to speak, were a body unheard of at first. Such boys found their way to the school no one can exactly say how, and now they swamp the foundationers, though the latter have been increased in number, and a band of seventy collegers represents the original body of twenty-five poor grammar-scholars. In the same way the staff of masters has, as a necessity, grown in like proportion, and the original master and usher have become the head and lower masters respectively. A change, too, has come over the Provosts. The post which they fill is now one chiefly of dignified ease, and the responsible chiefs have been for many generations of schoolboys, at any rate since the time of Dr. Keate, the headmasters.

Eton has become not merely a page but rather many pages in the history of England,

for here the intellects of, may we not say, most of our leaders of the last two hundred years have been trained? We cannot even walk through the Chiltern Hundreds as we are doing without finding many a place where an Etonian has left his name conspicuous. Thus it is that we associate Beaconsfield with the name of Edmund Waller and Stoke Pogis with that of Thomas Gray, or read the happy descriptions jotted down by Horace Walpole, and remember that these men were once Eton boys.

CHAPTER VIII.

'TWIXT THAMES AND COLN.

The Thames Valley—View of Eton—"The Black Pots"—Sir Henry Wotton, Isaac Walton, and Charles II.—Datchet Mead and Falstaff—Christopher Barker, the Queen's Printer—Wyrardsbury—Gordon Gyll and the Funeral of George Lipscombe—Place Farm—Magna Charta Island—Ankerwycke Priory—Sir Thomas Smyth and Bishop John Taylor—Horton—The Church and the Grave of Sara Milton—John Milton at Horton—Berkin Manor-House—Scenery of the *Sonnet to the Nightingale*, *L'Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso*—The Surrey Hills—Visits to London—Windsor—*Masques*—The Lawyers at Whitehall—Henry Lawes—Harefield House—The Countess of Derby and the Egertons—*Arcades*—Ludlow Castle and *Comus*—The Plague Year—*Lycidas*—Correspondence between Wotton and Milton—The Bulstrodes and the Manor-House—Colnbrook.

Now that we have regained the Thames valley we shall continue in it for a time. We are not, however, going to pass through such lovely scenery as that which we passed above Maidenhead Bridge, and the banks on each side of us will be, for the most part, low-lying meadow land. The places which we are going to visit will not be situated on wooded slopes, but still even this lowland scenery has its own quiet beauty.

"Where Thames along the daisied meads
His wave in lucid mazes leads,
Silent, slow, serenely flowing,
Wealth on either side bestowing."

We cast off from Windsor Bridge, and soon we are coasting along by the side of the Eton playing fields, and have on our left the most charming view that there is of the College. The red-brick buildings, partly veiled with ivy, peep out between the trees, and in the centre we see the two turrets of Provost Lupton's tower rising above their roofs, while the picturesque group on the left is flanked by the stately chapel. On the other side of the river we have the trees of Windsor Home Park, with the grand mass of the Castle towering above them.

But we must not leave the Buckinghamshire side, and must content ourselves with a view from the river only of Windsor Forest and Surrey hills. As soon as we have come to the end of the Playing Felds, we find ourselves at a well-known fishing station, called *The Black Pots*. We may connect this spot with the names of several illustrious fishermen from Eton and elsewhere. Hither came Provost Sir Henry Wotton with his friend Isaac Walton, and no more enthusiastic fisherman friend could he have had. Walton describes the Provost as an "undervaluer of money," by which we may

suppose that he intended to convey that he was a bad man of business and a spendthrift, which indeed seems to have been the case. Perhaps, however, all defects were in the opinion of the gentle Isaac more than counterbalanced by the fact that Sir Henry was "a dear lover and frequent practiser of the art of angling," and found it "after tedious study" a "rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness, and that it begat habits of peace and patience in those that professed and practised it." Walton also describes his own sport at the Black Pots, where he would fish for "a little samlet or skegger trout, and catch twenty or forty of them at a standing."

The Provost built himself a fishing-house on the spot, and the great decorative artist, Verrio, afterwards erected a summer-house, to which Charles II. came at times to fish. Pope has described the royal sport:—

> "Methinks I see our mighty monarch stand,
> The pliant rod now trembling in his hand.
> And see, he now doth up from Datchet come,
> Laden with spoils of slaughtered gudgeons, home."

Hither was borne, against his will, another famous but ficticious character, Sir John

Falstaff: "Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were called forth by their mistress, to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet Lane, to be thrown into the Thames and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horseshoe; think of that:—hissing hot—think of that, Master Brook." And drowned the fat knight would have been, as he had "a kind of alacrity in sinking, but that the shore was shelving and shallow." The hero of the buck-basket was fortunate in the place selected for his bath, for the banks, as we pass, appear to us as rather steep.

The village of Datchet stands almost on the river's edge. It has a pleasant wide street, in which grow large elm-trees. The church was rebuilt in 1860, but contains, rescued from an earlier building, a brass to Richard Hanbury, of the date 1593, and on the north side of the chancel the monument of Christopher Barker, who was Queen's printer in the time of Elizabeth, and was born here in 1529. Christopher Barker and his son Robert carried on their business at "The Tyger's Head," in Paternoster Row, and at "The Grasshopper," in St. Paul's Churchard.

About a mile north of Datchet lies Ditton Park. The house was rebuilt in 1813 by Elizabeth, Duchess of Buccleugh.

We pass another bend in the river, and come to Wyrardsbury, or as it is pronounced, Wraysbury, the extreme south-eastern parish of the Hundred of Stoke. The village itself, which stands a mile or so from the river, has nothing of any particular interest about it, and the church, which stands on the side next to the meadows, has been nearly rebuilt. Here lived Gordon Gyll, a local historian, who wrote accounts of his own village and of the neighbouring ones, about half-a-century ago. He is also to be held in remembrance by Buckinghamshire men, because he rescued the body of a brother-archæologist from a pauper's grave. This latter unfortunate antiquary was Dr. George Lipscombe, whose "History of Buckinghamshire" is still the standard work on the county, and who died in extreme poverty in the Liberties of the Fleet. Dr. Lipscombe belonged to another part of the county, for he was born at Quainton, near Aylesbury. It was quite by chance that Mr. Gyll heard of his death and contemplated ignominious funeral.

If we want to go thoroughly into the history of this corner of Buckinghamshire we shall read up Gordon Gyll's book, but in the meantime we will visit some of the places which he describes. Close to the river is an old house,

Place Farm, sometimes known as King John's Hunting Lodge, for we are now hard by a spot closely connected with that worthless individual. The house stands in damp orchards close to the stream, and one wonders what King John could have found to hunt here, unless it had been frogs and water-fowl. Indeed, the whole of this corner of the county is as flat as flat can be. Of course, the building itself, with some of its furniture, is, according to popular tradition, of the time of King John himself. Even the table is or was shown on which he signed Magna Charta! Magna Charta Island is a little lower down the river. It is now only divided by a moat from the mainland, and a house stands on it.

Still farther down the stream we come to Ankerwycke, where we have the scanty, the very scanty, remains of a Priory of Benedictine nuns, founded by Sir Gilbert Mountfichet in the time of Henry II. What ruins are to be seen stand in a grove near the river. Two archways and some walling are all that we can discover. These probably formed part of the domestic buildings of the priory. They are overshadowed by magnificent cedars and chestnuts, and the broad river circles round between these trees and the wooded slopes of Cooper's Hill on the Surrey side. In a house built on

the site of, or constructed out of the remains of the priory, lived Sir Thomas Smyth, who had possession of the estates of the nunnery in the time of Elizabeth. He was Provost of Eton, and Ambassador to France in 1551, but for some reason he afterwards came under the royal displeasure, and retired to this secluded spot for some years. John Taylor, the deprived Bishop of Lincoln, died here in 1553.

We strike inland to visit a place where we shall again come across memories of John Milton, Horton. The village itself is a particularly quiet and secluded one, and it is chiefly for its associations that we make our way to it. It lies amidst flat meadows, and the various branches of the river Colne, as they spread out over the level country, run through it in many places. The place has changed in one way since the time of Milton. Many of the houses have disappeared and more modern ones have taken their places. The house which the poet himself occupied is no longer to be found. The church, however, has not been much altered since the beginning of the sixteenth century, though it is a building of various dates. There is a Norman doorway on the south, in front of which stands a very beautiful wooden porch. The south arcade is Transitional, and the north chapel is Perpen-

dicular. There is no clerestory, and as the nave arches are not very lofty, it is somewhat gloomy. The spot which we particularly associate with Milton is the grave of his mother. It is in front of the altar, and a slab of dark blue stone marks the place. The slab bears the simple inscription—"Beneath this stone lie the remains of Sara, the wife of John Milton."

The son lived at Horton from July, 1632, to April, 1638, a period of nearly six years. They were important years, for he came here at the age of twenty-four, fresh from Cambridge, and left when he was thirty. Consequently his first residence in Buckinghamshire covers the years of his early manhood, and the years in which he produced his most exquisite work. This is what he says of this period himself: "At my father's country residence, whither he had retired to pass his old age, I, with every advantage of leisure, spent a complete holiday in turning over the Greek and Latin writers; not but that sometimes I exchanged the country for the town, either for the purpose of buying books or for that of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which sciences I then delighted. Having passed five years in this manner, after my mother's death, I, being desirous of seeing

foreign lands, and especially Italy, went abroad with one servant, having by entreaty obtained my father's consent." Most critics are agreed that, in addition to what he mentions himself, these five years at Horton saw the production of "The Sonnet to the Nightingale," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "The Arcades," "Comus," and "Lycidas."

A tradition, and nothing more, gives us as the residence of John Milton, senior, a house called Berkin Manor, situated opposite the church on the other side of the road. In the garden an aged apple-tree was pointed out under which his son was, according to the popular opinion concerning poets, accustomed to compose and write. Berkin Manor-House was pulled down in 1798, and a new house has been erected on its site.

There was a great difference between the first residence of Milton in Buckinghamshire at Horton, and his second sojourn at Chalfont. During these five years by the banks of the Thames and the Coln he was, as he strolled through lanes and meadows and walked by the waterside, able to take in those views of rural nature which are usually considered a necessary part of a poet's equipment. When he was living by the banks of the upper Coln thirty years afterwards, his eyes were closed to all

earthly sights. If, however, we are inclined to seek out any reference to local scenes in the poems written at Horton, we must remember that three of them, "The Arcades," "Comus," and "Lycidas," require their own local setting, and it is in "The Sonnet to the Nightingale," "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," therefore, that we must seek for any description of sights and sounds within reach of the flat meadowland wherein the poet's lot was cast for the time. He was evidently studying Italian when he wrote the two last-mentioned pieces, with a view doubtless to his contemplated Italian tour. This study resulted in his giving titles in a foreign language to the pieces, but with only a few exceptions the scenery described might have been found close at home. In the spinnies and groves at Horton he might frequently have listened to the—

> "Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
> Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still."

The walks by the Coln supplied for "L'Allegro"—

> "Meadows trim with daisies pied,
> Shallow brooks and rivers wide."

The farm-houses and homesteads around him could furnish his descriptions of the poultry-

yard, the scenes of rural labour, and the rustic superstitions of the "friar's lantern" and the "lubber fiend!"

Sometimes he crossed the Thames, we may suppose, and found his way to the Surrey hills, whence he looked down on the—

> "Russet lawns and fallows grey
> Where the nibbling flocks do stray."

Though these gentle slopes could hardly suggest to him—

> "Mountains on whose barren breast
> The labouring clouds do often rest."

There is, moreover, a plain reference to his frequent journeys to London, a ride of a couple of hours, in the lines—

> "Tower'd cities please us then
> And the busy hum of men."

Perchance during these visits his time was not altogether taken up with book-buying, and with the study of mathematics and music, but he found his way occasionally—

> "To the well-trod stage anon,
> If Jonson's learned sock be on,
> Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood notes wild."

Nor did he neglect the glories of Royal Windsor so close at hand. He might easily cross

the Thames by the ferry at Place Farm or at Datchet, and strolling through the Park, when the King's hounds were out—

> "Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
> Cheerly rouse the slumb'ring morn,"

would reach the Castle with its "towers and battlements"—

> "Bosom'd high in tufted trees.

Perhaps the huge Round Tower—it was not so high though in the time of Milton as it is now, for Wyattville, the *Restorer*, added many feet to its height—suggested the idea in "Il Penseroso" of—

> "Some high lonely tower,
> Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
> With thrice great Hermes."

St. George's Chapel, combined with memories of King's College Chapel at Cambridge, may have led him to speak of—

> "The high embowered roof
> With antique pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows richly dight
> Casting a dim religious light."

That services such as those which he would find there were a delight to his musical ear, he tells us in the lines—

"Then let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes."

The two masques which Milton composed were certainly written, or at least thought out, at Horton. It was the time of masques. They were not only popular but fashionable, and all the upper classes, royalty included, were taking part in them. Even the grave lawyers took them up hotly, and the leaders of the bar turned from their briefs to give attention to theatrical management.

Bulstrode Whitlock has given us a very full account of a masque performed by members of the Inns of Court in the Banqueting House at Whitehall in 1633, the music for which was composed by Henry Lawes. Milton probably heard much of this masque, and of one which followed a few months after. His brother, Christopher, was a student at the Inner Temple, and Henry Lawes was his intimate friend. Moreover, there was a near relationship between Bulstrode Whitlock and Milton's neighbours, the family at the Manor House in Horton. What occupied such learned men as Whitlock, Hyde, and Selden might not be beneath the attention of the grave young

poet in Buckinghamshire, and we find Milton writing in this year of 1634, at the suggestion, in all probability, of Lawes, the words for two of these fashionable masques, which were to be performed in aristocratic mansions by members of aristocratic families.

The first of these, *Arcades*, was given at a house not very far distant from Horton. If Milton had followed up the Colne valley, passing through the village of Chalfont, where he was afterwards to sojourn for a time, and had then turned to the right across the river at Denham, he would arrive at Harefield House, where was then living a venerable and distinguished lady, Alice, Countess-Dowager of Derby, and daughter of Sir John Spencer, of Althorpe, in Northamptonshire. Though Harefield is across the borders of the county, we cannot but make some reference to the performance of *Arcades* while we have the life of Milton at Horton before us. Lady Derby was closely connected with the family of Egerton. Her second husband, though she still kept her title of Countess-Dowager of Derby, was Lord Chancellor Egerton, and her son-in-law, John Egerton, who was created Earl of Bridgwater, the husband of her second daughter by her first marriage, was also her step-son. The Earl and Countess

of Bridgwater had a numerous family, ten of whom were alive in 1634. Of these children two only were boys, Lord Brackley, the heir, who was then about twelve years old, and Thomas Egerton about a year younger. All their sisters were older than they were, and the one just above the boys was Lady Alice Egerton, a young damsel of about fifteen. The Egertons were a very musical family, and the younger members were pupils of Lawes. The two boys had taken part in the masque at Whitehall, and had perhaps suggested to their musical tutor that they would like to perform an entertainment of similar character in honour of their grandmother. The result was the production at Harefield House, some time in 1633, of *Arcades*, and thus Milton came to close the long list of poets who had done honour to the venerable Lady from Edward Spenser onwards, so that, as was said by Warton, "The peerage-book of this Countess is the poetry of her times."

One would like to know whether Milton, attended the representation himself, and heard his lines chanted to the music of his friend. Did he stand on one side of the stately avenue which led up to Harefield House, and watch the procession move up to *the State*, on which was seated the Countess? Did he see the bevy of

handsome grand-daughters, the "fair silver-buskin'd nymphs," and their two young brothers trip through the wood singing as they went? Did he hear Lawes, as "Genius of the Wood," chant the graceful words in honour of the Lady of the house? One would have liked to have assisted at such a *first night* as that.

It is a far cry from Harefield to the Marches of Wales and the romantically situated town of Ludlow, and it is thither that *Comus* would transport us. But we must not stray so far from the Chiltern Hundreds. Let us merely consider the circumstances which brought about the production and performance of what is perhaps the very gem of musical English poetry. The young Egertons had been highly delighted with the success of their performance at their grandmother's home, and Lady Alice and the two young boys pressed their father, the Earl of Bridgwater, to allow them the next year to perform something of the same sort at the magnificent castle on the banks of the Teme in which he had taken up his residence as President of Wales. The music-master is consulted again, and he, as before, applies to his friend to write the words of the contemplated masque, and the result is *Comus*.

We know that Milton had a dread of the plague, and to escape from its presence in London thirty years later he moved down to Chalfont. Perhaps it was the remembrance of the year 1637 which gave him such a horror of that awful sickness. It was the year of the death of his mother, and also a time in which Horton and the neighbourhood were terribly visited by the plague.

But it was also the year of the production of "Lycidas." Edward King, the subject of that beautiful threnody, was lost in a foundering ship off the coast of Wales on his way to Ireland on the 11th August, and at the close of the year King's friends of Christ's College, and elsewhere at Cambridge, Milton amongst them, mourned his loss in copies of verses, amongst which the only one now remembered is "Lycidas." Two more poetical pieces, classical ones, are also assigned by some to this period of the poet's life, "Ad Patrem," to be found in the "Sylvarum Liber," and the Greek translation of the one hundred and fourteenth Psalm in the same collection.

In 1638 the connection between Milton and Horton came to an end. He had watched over the death-bed of one of his parents, and had at last received permission from his father to undertake the much longed-for journey to

Italy. His surviving parent he left in all probability in charge of his brother Christopher, who had lately married, and was prepared to come and live at Horton. But there is one more event to record in the Horton life. It was only on the eve of his departure from the neighbourhood of Eton College that Milton appears to have made the acquaintance of Sir Henry Wotton, the fishing Provost. Let us close what we have to say of Milton in this part of the Chiltern Hundreds by quoting a valedictory letter from the head of Eton to his newly discovered and congenial acquaintance.

"From the College, this 13th of April, 1638.

"SIR,—It was a special favour when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it, and to enjoy it rightly; and, in truth, if I could then have imagined your further stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. H., I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your learned friend, at a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together some good authors of the ancient time; among which I observed you to have been familiar.

"Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kind letter from you dated the 6th of this month, and for a dainty piece of enter-

tainment which came therewith, wherein I should much commend the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your songs and odes; whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language. *Ipsa mollities!* But I must not omit to tell you that I only owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artifices. For the work itself I had viewed some good while before with singular delight, having received it from our common friend Mr. R., in the very close of the late R.'s "Poems," printed at Oxford; whereunto it is added, as I now suppose, that the accessory might help out the principal according to the art of stationers, and to leave the reader *con bocco dolce*.

"Now, Sir, concerning your travels, wherein I may challenge a little more privilege of discourse with you. I suppose you will not blanch Paris on your way; therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B., whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S., as his governor, and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your future journey into Italy, where he did reside by my choice some time for the King, after mine own recess from Venice.

"I should think that your best line will be through the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa, whence the passage into Tuscany is as dismal as a Gravesend barge. I hasten, as you do, to Florence or Siena—the rather to tell you a short story from the interest you have given me in your safety.

"At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni, an old Roman courtier in dangerous times—having been steward to the Ducadi Pagliano, who, with all his family, were strangled, save this only man, that escaped by foresight of the tempest. With him I had

often much chat of those affairs, into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and, at my departure towards Rome (which had been the centre of his experience), I had won confidence enough to beg his advice how I might carry myself securely there, without offence of others or of mine own conscience. '*Signor arrigo mio*,' says he, '*I pensieri stretti et il viso sciolto*' (Thoughts close, looks loose) will go safely over the whole world. Of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgment doth need no commentary; and, therefore, sir, I will warrant you with it to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining your friend, as much at command as any of longer date,

"HENRY WOTTON.

"POSTSCRIPT,—Sir, I have expressly sent this my footboy to prevent your departure without some acknowledgment from me of the receipt of your obliging letter, having myself through some business, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part, where I shall find you fixed, I shall be glad and diligent to entertain you with home novelties: even for some fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the cradle."

The "dainty piece of entertainment" is *Comus*, a copy of which appears to have been sent to Wotton by Milton. The Provost, however, seems to have received a previous copy bound up with some poems.

We shall perhaps walk on to Colnbrook. It is only a mile distant, but there is not much to see. It had certain importance in coach-

ing days, for it is situated on the great west road, and it once abounded in inns, some of which, curious old buildings, still remain. Colnbrook also once possessed a market and a corporation, which latter dated from 1543. It has, moreover, a much earlier history if it be true that it represents the "Ad Pontes" of Antoninus. At any rate, it has plenty of bridges at the present day over the Coln and its branches.

Perhaps we shall take a walk down the street and take a look at some of the old inns of which we have spoken. There is a gruesome story connected with one of the Colnbrook hostelries, not one of those still remaining, however. The landlord of the said inn, in days long ago, contrived a wicked death-trap for his more wealthy guests, for at the time of which the story speaks merchants and others travelled with much money on their persons. The evil host ushered the traveller with much ceremony into the bed-chamber, where was a bed large and sumptuous. At dead of night he lowered the bedstead by a cunning contrivance of ropes and weights into a vault beneath, where his murderous deeds were done, and the bodies of his victims were then cast into the Coln which flowed below. More than sixty murders were committed in the days

of the Norman kings by the wicked host, as is duly set forth in a book published at the beginning of the seventeenth century, which gives a full and minute description of the making away of the last victim, one Master Cole, a wealthy carrier of Reading. For this murder the landlord paid with his own life, but the name of the unfortunate carrier, adds the story, was given to the stream "Whereinto Cole was cast," which "did ever since carrie the name of Cole, and the town Colebrooke." As we have seen, however, the town has a history which goes a good deal farther back than the time of the Normans, and the river Coln had a name before the body of the murdered Master Cole was tumbled into it in the days of Henry I. What the origin of the name may be, however, is a matter which we may leave to experts.

CHAPTER IX.

ROUND STOKE POGIS.

Upton Church—Grave of Sir William Herschel—Slough—The Herschels—Salt Hill—Eton Montem—Miss Edgeworth's Drama—Stoke Place and Sir George Grote—Stoke Pogis—The Churchyard—Grave of Thomas Gray—His Eton Life—His Visit to Uncle Rogers and Description of the House—Winter of 1741 and 1742 at Stoke—"The Ode on Eton College" and "The Elegy"—Death of Richard West—Second Residence at Cambridge and Reconciliation with Horace Walpole—Letter to Walpole on "The Elegy"—"A Long Story"—Death of Mrs. Gray—Another Letter to Walpole on "The Elegy"—The Church—Monuments of Molyns and Hastings Families—Stoke House—Erroneous Tradition about Sir Christopher Hatton—Sir Edward Coke—His Marriage, and Residence and Death at Stoke—Sir John Gayer and "The Lion Sermon"—Baylies—Wexham—Langley Church and Park—Black Park—Fulmer—Visit of Professor Owen to Fulmer Place.

We propose to start for Stoke Pogis from Eton, and the first place which we come to, as we proceed northwards, is Upton, which lies a little to the south of the great road to the west. We find here a fine old church, restored in 1852, small but interesting. It is Norman, with the exception of the Early English south aisle, and it has a central tower, and a groined

roof to the chancel. Here we again come across the family of Bulstrode, and find a brass to Sir Edward Bulstrode, who was Squire of the Body to the two first Tudors. In the churchyard we shall notice the grave of Sir William Herschel, the astronomer, who lived and died at Upton.

When we reach the great high-road, we find that a new town has sprung up along its course for some distance. This newly-built district is called Slough, a name more familiar to most people than that of the mother-parish. The church here is, of course, modern, but it stands almost on the site of the Observatory erected by Sir William Herschel. This remarkable man, who was a native of Hanover, began life as a musician and organist, after a few years' service in the Hanoverian Guards. He was, when he arrived in England, at first a member of the band of the Durham Militia, and then became an organist, first at Halifax and afterwards at the Octagon Chapel at Bath. Together with his musical studies he carried on that of mathematics, and soon turned his attention to the construction of large telescopes. King George III. gave him a pension to enable him to devote himself entirely to astronomy, and Herschel settled down close to Windsor, first at Datchet, and then in this

house at Slough, where, in 1789, he constructed his largest telescope, and where he lived, engaged in his astronomical observations, until his death in 1822.

With Sir William Herschel lived his celebrated sister Caroline. She was twelve years younger than her brother, and came to join him in England when he was occupying a leading musical position in Bath. She moved with him to Slough, and remained there, assisting him in his works, and making researches of her own, until his death, when she returned to her native Hanover, and died there in 1848, at the remarkable age of ninety-eight.

Yet one more member of this distinguished family is connected with Slough, for here was born, in 1792, Sir John Herschel, who has left even a greater name than did his father. He was Senior Wrangler at Cambridge, and devoted his whole life to astronomy, not only in the northern hemisphere, but in the southern also. They were a long-lived family, the Herschels, for Sir John, though he lived to the age of seventy-nine, was five years younger than his father, and nineteen years younger than his aunt had been, at their respective deaths.

When we reach the old Bath road we shall

probably turn westward for a little distance to visit the tumulus called Salt Hill, so famous in the history of Eton. Hither it was that the boys came in procession on Whitsun Tuesday, making their way, as they termed it, *ad montem*—hence the name of Eton Montem—and collecting the *Salt*. The procession, which originated from a manorial custom by which the College held the manor, became a very costly affair, as many of the boys sported handsome fancy dresses for the occasion. The *salt*, which sometimes amounted to more than a thousand pounds, was given to the Captain of the Collegers towards his expenses at King's College, Cambridge.

Does anyone read Maria Edgeworth's "Parent's Assistant" now, and turn to "Eton Montem," there to make the acquaintance of Lord John, the proud young aristocrat, with "the back that never was bent"; Talbot, the over-sensitive hero; Wheeler the toady; and Bursal the purse-proud; Rory O'Ryan, the comic Irish boy; and Talbot's pretty sister Louisa, not to mention Finsbury the man-milliner, with his load of fancy dresses, caps, and *helmets?*

But we must pass on to the village which gives its name to the Hundred, Stoke Pogis. On the way we pass the home of another distinguished man. Sir George Grote, the his-

torian of Greece, lived at Stoke Place, on the right-hand side of the road.

A mile farther and we reach the park, churchyard, and church of Stoke Pogis. Now it must be confessed that the churchyard of Stoke is not situated in a very romantic position. It lies, pleasantly enough, on one side of a somewhat flat park, and is surrounded by large trees; but there is no remarkable beauty about it. We might come across such a God's-acre almost anywhere in England. Graves, paths, and turf are trim and formal, and "the ivy-mantled tower" has been surmounted by a hideous extinguisher steeple. The spot to which we shall most likely first make our way is to be found just beneath the east wall of the chancel. Here lie the bodies of Thomas Gray, of his mother Dorothy Gray, and of his aunt Mary Antrobus. The poet sleeps in the graveyard which he has immortalised, and we may sit down—

> "Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
> Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,"—

and run over some of the points in his life, especially at Stoke Pogis, and his connection with the Chiltern Hundreds. To begin with, we think of him first as the Eton boy, studious beyond his years, solemn and reserved, for, as

Walpole says, "Gray never was a boy"; but yet forming a close intimacy with the rattling Horace, as well as with the more congenial Richard West. Asheton, the Asheton to whom Walpole refers in his letter to Montague from "the Christopher," was the fourth member of

Stoke Pogis Church.

what was sometimes called "the quadruple alliance." Did the future poet, we wonder, ever wander in an afternoon stroll as far as this quiet churchyard?

It is not until his Cambridge life at Peterham has commenced that we find Gray first connected with Stoke. We have referred to a letter to Walpole, in which he describes a visit

to his uncle's house, which was situated close to Burnham Common and Burnham Beeches. The old uncle, so attached to his dogs, and once so keen a sportsman, was a retired lawyer, it seems, named Rogers, who had married the sister of Mrs. Gray. Philip Gray, the father of the poet, and his brother-in-law, Mr. Rogers, died about the same time, in the year 1741; and the two widows, together with an unmarried sister, Mary Antrobus, joined housekeeping in the house of Mrs. Rogers, at Stoke. Gray described the house, long afterwards, in a letter to a friend, Mr. Palgrave, who was making a tour in Scotland in 1758.

"I do not know how to make you amends, having neither rock, ruin, nor precipice near to send you; they do not grow in the south; but only say the word, if you would have a compact neat box of red brick with sash windows, or a grotto made of flints and shell-work, or a walnut-tree with three mole-hills under it, stuck with honeysuckles round a basin of gold fishes, and you shall be satisfied; they shall come by the Edinburgh coach."

It was the year 1737, the last of his first residence at Cambridge, when Gray paid his visit to Uncle Rogers. It was five years later, just after the conclusion of that foreign tour which had been begun in the company of Horace Walpole, but finished in solitude, that he began to make his home with his mother

and aunts in the little house at Stoke Pogis. For a year or more he lived there, before beginning his second residence at Cambridge, and he afterwards made it his country home during the vacations, not only up to the time of his mother's death, but, as we may gather from his letters, also after that event.

That winter of 1741 and 1742, spent at Stoke, probably saw some of his best-known writings begun, if not completed. Then it was that he wrote the "Ode on the Prospect of Eton College," and began the "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard." It was the time, moreover, of the death of his Eton friend, Richard West, hence, probably, the note of extreme sadness in the words about the old school-life.

In the autumn of 1742 Gray's second residence at Cambridge, which was first at Peterham, and then at Pembroke Hall, commenced. We do not propose to follow him thither, nor to tell again some of the stories of the poet's University life, or recount the practical jokes played by the undergraduates on their unfortunate senior. We may refer, however, to the reconciliation with Horace Walpole which took place about this time, for we may consider the latter almost as much a Buckinghamshire man, from his frequent visits to this neigh-

bourhood, as Gray himself. We know not exactly how it was that the disagreement took place between the old school friends on their Italian journey. What Walpole himself says is that Gray was "too serious a companion" for him. He "was for antiquities, &c., while I was for perpetual balls and plays." But surely the owner of Strawberry Hill a little disparages himself in hinting that antiquities were not to *his* taste. The quarrel was made up in 1745, some five years from its commencement. Gray's own account of the reconciliation is amusing. The meeting put the two men on to letter-writing terms again.

"I went," he writes, "the following evening to see the *party* (as Mrs. Foible says), and was somewhat abashed at his confidence: he came to meet me, kissed me on both sides, with all the ease of one who receives an acquaintance just come out of the country, squatted me into a fauteuil, began to talk of the town, and this event, that, and t'other, and continued, with little interruption, for three hours, when I took my leave very indifferently pleased, but treated with monstrous good-breeding. I supped with him next night (as he desired); Asheton was there, whose formalities tickled me inwardly, for he (I found) was to be angry about the letter I

had written him. However, in going home together, our hackney coach jumbled us into a sort of reconciliation; he hammered out somewhat like an excuse, and I received it very readily, because I cared not twopence whether it were true or not, so we grew the best acquaintance imaginable, and I sat with him on Sunday some hours alone, when he informed me of abundance of anecdotes, much to my satisfaction, and, in short, opened (I really believe) his heart to me with that sincerity, that I found I had still less reason to have a good opinion of him than (if possible) I ever had before. Next morning I breakfasted alone with Mr. Walpole, when we had all the *eclaircissement* I ever expected, and I left him far better satisfied than I have been hitherto."

In 1747 the "Ode on Eton College" was published, and, in 1749, in which year the family party at Stoke was diminished by the death of his favourite aunt, Mary Antrobus, Gray completed his "Elegy," though he did not then give it to the world at large. He sent Walpole a copy of the poem, together with the following letter, the next June: "As I live in a place, where even the ordinary tattle of the town arrives not till it is stale, and which produces no events of its own, you

will not desire any excuse from me for writing so seldom, especially as, of all people living I know, you are the least a friend to letters spun out of one's own brains, with all the toil and constraint that accompanies sentimental productions. I have been here at Stoke a few days (where I shall continue a good part of the summer), and having put an end to a thing, whose beginning you have seen long ago, I immediately send it you. You will, I hope, look upon it in the light of a thing with an end to it; a merit that most of my writings have wanted, and are like to want, but which this epistle, I am determined, shall not want."

It was about this time that Gray made the acquaintance of his neighbours, the ladies at Stoke House. The "Elegy," handed about in manuscript, had come under the notice of Lady Cobham, who was then living at the Manor-house, and she sent her two cousins, Lady Schaub and Miss Speed, to call upon the poet. They did not find him in, but left a card, a proceeding which, it would seem, hardly justified the production of the very fantastic piece called "A Long Story," which is interesting, however, for the reference to the traditional history of Stoke House, with which Gray had made himself acquainted.

But we must leave any description of the mansion until we have quitted the churchyard.

In 1753 Mrs. Gray died. The epitaph which her son has placed over her grave expresses prettily the fact that all the little baby brothers and sisters were gone before. Thomas was the fifth and only one who passed beyond infancy out of a family of twelve. "The careful, tender mother," he calls her, "of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her."

A letter to Walpole, written two months before her death, mentions her illness, and also tells us something about Gray having at last made up his mind to allow his productions to be published in print, instead of remaining in their original or copied manuscript. The "Elegy" had already found its way into a periodical, called the *Magazine of Magazines*, but in so garbled a condition that Gray had given a commission to Dodsley to reprint it, with corrections. This letter to Walpole evidently speaks of a subsequent publication by Dodsley, which was to have, amongst other illustrations, one representing a village funeral, and also, if it had not been absolutely forbidden by the poet, a head of Gray himself, engraved from a portrait by Echart.

"I am at present at Stoke, to which place I came at half-an-hour's warning, upon the news I received of my mother's illness, and did not expect to have found her alive; but when I arrived she was much better, and continues so. I shall, therefore, be very glad to make you a visit at Strawberry Hill, whenever you give me notice of a convenient time. I am surprised at the print, which far surpasses my idea of London graving; the drawing itself was so finished, that I suppose it did not require all the art I had imagined to copy it tolerably. My aunts seeing me open your letter, took it to be a burying ticket, and asked whether anybody had left me a ring; and so they still conceive it to be, even with all their spectacles on. Heaven forbid they should suspect it to belong to any verses of mine, they would burn me for a poet. On my own part I am satisfied, if this design of yours should succeed so well as you intend it; and yet I know it will be accompanied by something not at all agreeable to me. (While I write this I receive your second letter.) Sure, you are not out of your wits? This I know, if you suffer my head to be printed, you will infallibly put me out of mine. I conjure you immediately to put a stop to any such design. Who is at the expense of engraving it? I know not; but if it is Dodsley, I will make up the loss to him. The thing as it was, I know, will make me ridiculous enough; but to appear in proper person at the head of my works, consisting of half-a-dozen Ballads in thirty pages, would be worse than the piliory. I do assure you, if I had received such a book, with such a frontispiece, without any warning, I believe it would have given me a palsy; therefore, I rejoice to have received this notice, and shall not be easy till you tell me all thoughts of it are laid aside. I am extremely in earnest, and cannot bear even the idea."

We have already quoted a letter written to Mr. Palgrave from Stoke so late as the year 1758, and, two years before, he writes to his friend and biographer, Mr. Mason, to let him know that he is "at Stoke, hearing, seeing, doing absolutely nothing." It was a retreat of quiet and calm, however, as he himself has told us,

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

Let us pass from the churchyard into the church. This is a building of various dates. We have already noticed the recently added spire. The tower has been also otherwise mutilated, for a western door has been blocked up, and a window inserted. There is a brick chapel to the family of Hastings, and there are monuments of earlier proprietors, amongst them the tomb of Sir John Molyns, who was treasurer to Edward III., and died in 1425; and brasses to Sir William Molyns, who fell at the siege of Orleans, in 1429, and to the Ladies Margaret and Eleanor Molyns. In 1749, when the publication of the "Elegy" brought Stoke Pogis Church under his notice, Walpole wrote to Montague to go over there, and copy for him the inscription on the tomb of one of his ancestors, a Hastings. We shall notice also the ancient stained-glass windows,

containing the arms of these and other families. Before the family of Molyns was that of Pogis, who came here by the marriage of Robert Pogis, Knight of the Shire, in 1310, with Amicia de Stoke.

And now let us go into the park, within which once stood the home of these different families. We notice a very conspicuous object between the church and the road. It is a huge sarcophagus, erected as a monument to Gray by one of the Penn family, descendants of William Penn. The churchyard was sufficient memorial to the Poet in itself.

The mansion, built by Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, in the time of Elizabeth, was pulled down by the Penns in 1789, and the present building erected on its site. The Elizabethan house had been purchased by Sir Edward Coke, the celebrated Chief Justice, from the third Earl of Huntingdon, quite at the close of the sixteenth century, and he entertained the Queen here very sumptuously in 1601. Late in life he married, as his second wife, the widow of Sir William Newport, sister's son to Lord Chancellor Hatton, who became his uncle's heir, and took his name. This marriage of Sir Edward Coke has been sufficient to hang on to Stoke House

the tradition that the dancing Chancellor once resided here. This is hardly probable, since the Chief Justice, as we have seen, succeeded to the family of Hastings. Gray has, however, followed the tradition in "A Long Story," and has made the Hattons succeed to the Huntingdons:—

"In Britain's isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands;
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employed the power of fairy hands.
To raise the ceiling's fretted height,
Each panel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages that lead to nothing.
Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
My grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls;
The seals and masses danced before him.
His bushy beard and shoe-strings green,
His high-crowned hat and satin doublet,
Moved the stout heart of England's Queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it."

It was more likely at Holdenby House, in Northamptonshire, that Sir Christopher Hatton indulged in these light-hearted festivities, especially at the marriage of his nephew and heir, when, as we are told, he "danced the measures at the solemnity," leaving his gown on his chair with the words, "Lie thou there, Chancellor."

But there was no question of merriment when poor old Sir Edward Coke brought his wife to Stoke Pogis. They were married in 1598, but the Lady stipulated that the wedding should be in private, and that she should retain her title of Lady Hatton, for her first husband had been created a peer. She was a daughter of Lord Burleigh, and for this irregular marriage, performed without banns or licence, the two great lawyers, the husband and the father, together with the bride and the officiating minister, were cited into the ecclesiastical court.

There was one daughter born to the ill-matched pair, and it is not to be wondered at that this young lady turned out very badly. She was married to Sir John Villiers, who was created Viscount Purbeck and Baron Villiers of Stoke Pogis, but she left him for Sir Robert Howard. It must be mentioned, however, to the credit of the lady, that she came to her old father when he "felt himself alone on the earth, was suspected by his King, deserted by his friends, and detested by his wife." The wife also set off for Stoke Pogis when she heard that her husband was on his death-bed, not to take leave of him, however, but to take possession of the house. When she had reached Colnbrook a messenger met her, and

told her that Sir Edward was alive and mending. Thereupon she turned back to London in disgust.

The suspicions of the King resulted in a search of the house by Sir Francis Windebank, Secretary of State, when Coke's papers, including his will, were carried off, and not returned to the family until 1641. This search was made only three days before the death of the poor old man, which event occurred on the 3rd of September, 1634. He had reached the age of eighty-four. Charles I. was himself brought here as a prisoner in 1647, when in the custody of the army.

There was another celebrity connected with Stoke House. This was Sir John Gayer, Lord Mayor of London, who was knighted by Charles I. in 1646. He, for a short time, owned and occupied the mansion, but he is better known as the Indian merchant who, in his travels, had the adventure with the lion, which led to his founding, in memory of his escape, the annual *Lion Sermon* at the church of St. Katharine Cree in the City. The Gayer family were strong supporters of the Stuarts, and Sir John's successor, Robert Gayer, refused to allow William III., when he called at Stoke, to enter the mansion.

We shall find in the village some alms-

houses, which were founded by Lord Hastings in 1557, and rebuilt by the Penns in 1765. The Penns also erected the lofty monument to the memory of Sir Edward Coke, which we see near the House.

There is another old house at Stoke which is worth notice, Baylies, which was built by Dr. Godolphin, Provost of Eton in 1695, and the residence afterwards of Dr. Gregory Hascard, Dean of Windsor, to whom there is a monument in the church, and of Lord Chesterfield of *the letters*.

East of Stoke Pogis is the tiny village of Wexham, with a little low-built church, as plain in its architectural features as that at Upton, though of later date. Beyond this is Langley Park, which is some distance from the village of that name. The house was built about 1750 by the second Duke of Marlborough, who also planted the *Black Park*, a large fir-wood farther to the north, in the centre of which is a gloomy lake. The church at Langley has a Norman nave, and an Early Decorated chancel, in which is the monument of Sir John Kedermister, with his wife and their five children. Sir John obtained a grant from the Dean and Chapter of Windsor, in the year 1613, to erect a building adjoining the church on the south side, and forming a very

conspicuous feature, both without and within. First, we enter a sort of transept, raised high above a vault, and furnished at the end with a long, comfortable, family pew, in front of which is a wooden screen, carved and painted in the style of the early part of the seventeenth century. We note that the screen is provided with little casements, which can be closed at pleasure, one in front of each seat, so that every occupant of the pew can, if he wishes so to do, retire from the congregation, and from public worship. Out of this pew we pass through a door into another building, occupying the place usually taken by a north aisle, and which we find to be a small room, surrounded by bookshelves, also ornamented with paintings, and containing a large collection chiefly of theological books, handsomely printed and bound in the best style of the time. This is the Kedermister Library, founded by Sir John for the use of the rector of the parish and of other neighbouring parsons. Nor did the worthy Sir John confine himself to providing for men's minds alone, for we see on each side of the churchyard the picturesque blocks of almshouses which he built for the benefit of the old people of the parish.

To the north-east of Stoke is Fulmer, which was formerly a chapelry of Datchet. The

church is a specimen of Jacobean Gothic, erected in 1610 by Sir Marmaduke Darell, whose effigy, together with that of Dame Alice, his wife, we see in the chancel. Sir Marmaduke, as the inscription informs us, was a servant to Queen Elizabeth in her wars by

Fulmer Church.

sea and land, and cofferer to James I. and Charles I.

At Fernacres Cottage in Fulmer lived Sir William White Cooper, the distinguished oculist. Here he was visited by his friend, Professor Richard Owen, whose great-grandfather had built Fulmer Place, which stands in the village, and which descended to the Pro-

fessor's father. Cooper accompanied his guest to his paternal home, and thus describes the visit: "We paused for a moment on crossing the common where the tower of the church first comes into view in the centre of the beautifully wooded hollow. As he walked on, Owen mentioned his recollection of his father telling him that when he was a little boy he helped to lead his grandfather, who was nearly blind, down to the fish-ponds at Fulmer Place to feed the carp. After passing the village and turning across the fields, the six large fish-ponds came into view. We turned down towards them, Owen walking with eager steps. 'Ah!' said he, 'I can fancy that was the very spot where the old man stood as he fed the fish.' We lingered hereabouts for some time, then strolled to the garden almost in silence—to the garden where stands an enormous tree, known as the Balm of Gilead Pine. This, likely enough, was planted by Owen's great-grandfather, Richard Eskrigge, and certainly from its size was coeval with him. The house had been completely remodelled with great taste; but it was with the park that Owen was most interested. He examined the outline of the boundary wall, which could not have been altered; he put a fragment of a brick in his pocket, and I

gathered a twig of an old Scotch fir which he carried away. We then walked through the village home, my friend expressing the satisfaction he felt at having realised at length that which had been—ever since he came to London—his most earnest hope."

CHAPTER X.

ABOVE COLNBROOK BRIDGE.

The Coln Valley—Richings Lodge—Henry, Earl Bathurst—Algernon, Duke of Somerset, and his Duchess—Her Account of the Place and Shenstone's Description—Iver Church—Monuments of the Salters—Denham—The Church—Monuments of the Peckhams, Sir Roger Hill, the Bowyers, and others—Denham Place—Distinguished Residents and Visitors—The Chapel—Interior Decorations—Denham Court—John Dryden—Adventures of Charles II.—Conclusion—Thomas Gray on Antiquarianism.

The last place which we visited, Fulmer, was pleasantly situated in a little side-valley running down into that of the Coln, and the scenery reminded us somewhat of what we found when we were nearer to the Chiltern Hills, but we are now, in our last excursion through the Hundreds, going to follow up the river which forms the eastern boundary of Buckinghamshire, and our way will be by flat meadows and low-lying marshes. We shall on the banks of the Coln return to such scenery as that which we found when we were by the side of the Thames at Wyrardsbury and Ankerwycke.

Just north of Colnbrook we come to Richings Lodge, which belonged, in the early part of the last century, to Henry, Earl Bathurst, the statesman and patron of literature, the opponent of Sir Robert Walpole, and the intimate friend of all the eminent writers of the time, many of whom came to visit him here. Earl Bathurst sold the house in 1739 to Algernon, Earl of Hertford, who became Duke of Somerset in 1748, but died at Richings two years later. His widow was also much in the literary set of the period, and was, according to the poetical taste of the day, addressed under the name of *Eusebia* by Dr. Watts, and under that of *Cleora* by Mrs. Rowe. This lady was much pleased with the grounds at Richings, or Percy Lodge as it was then called, as laid out by her husband's predecessor, for, as Pope had said,

"Who plants like Bathurst?"

and she wrote in high praise of them to her friend, Lady Pomfret.

William Shenstone, moreover, poured out a poem of twenty-five stanzas in praise of "Percy Lodge" and the Duchess. One of these stanzas may suffice.

"Fatigu'd with form's oppressive laws,
When Somerset avoids the great,
When cloy'd with merited applause,
She seeks the rural calm retreat."

Richings Lodge is in the parish of Iver, and

the village we shall find about two miles farther to the north, close to the river. The church is interesting, for it is of various dates from Norman to Perpendicular. There is a curious monument to the family of Salter, two members of which, Sir George and Sir Edward Salter, were carvers to Charles I. Mary, Lady Salter, is represented as rising from her coffin in a shroud.

We follow the river up and in about four miles come to Denham, the last parish which we have to visit in the Chiltern Hundreds. Fortunately it is one of the most picturesque and interesting of all which lie in this part of Buckinghamshire. We do not, it is true, find the beautiful wooded hills which we have seen elsewhere, but in the midst of the quiet river scenery which surrounds us we have a village in itself well worth a visit. Denham lies remote and shut off, about half-a-mile away from the high-road, and is built upon the flat land which marks the meeting-place of the Coln and the Misbourn. The houses are almost all of them of red brick with ornamental gables, either stepped or of some other unusual architectural design. They have also windows of Queen Anne or early Georgian style, and therefore may safely be set down in date to the time when Sir Roger Hill, of whom we shall have to speak later on was Squire here.

We first make our way through the winding

Denham Church.

village street to the church, which stands by

itself to the east. We find that it is a building almost entirely of Perpendicular date, though the tower, in which later windows have been inserted, bears some marks of early work. Notwithstanding its distance from the downs of the Chilterns, we notice that the church is entirely of flint work. We enter and find that it is full of monuments which commemorate, most of them, members of the families connected with the two principal houses in the parish. Here, for instance, on the north side of the altar we find the effigies of Sir Edmund Peckham and his wife, Anne. Sir Edmund died in 1564, and the figures are capital examples of the sculpture of the period. On the other side of the chancel is a brass to Sir Robert Peckham, son of Sir Edmund, who died at Rome. His body was buried in the church of St. Gregory, but his heart was sent to Denham, as is duly set forth in a long inscription. The son, who had been Privy Councillor to Queen Mary, only outlived his father five years. South of the altar is a curious late brass to Philip Edelin, who died in 1656, and underneath the chancel arch are several brasses of earlier date, amongst them that of Agnes Jordan, Prioress of Sion House, near Isleworth.

The Peckhams belonged to Denham Place, and their successors there were the Hills.

There is a large monument to Sir Roger Hill, the first of this family, and Abigail, his wife. There are also many tablets to members of the Bowyer family of Denham Court.

The two houses which we have mentioned lie to the east and west of the village respectively. Leaving the churchyard by the eastern side we see before us a remarkably handsome pair of iron gates. Passing through them we enter an avenue of lime-trees, about half-a-mile in length, which leads across the park to the House. The remains of another, and more ancient, avenue of elms may be traced alongside.

Denham Court is a house of some age, but has been much pulled about and added to. The oldest part seems to be the wing which we see in front of us as we cross the bridge over the little hurrying Misbourn, where it skirts the gardens. At any rate there are some old windows in this part which have been walled up or replaced by others of Queen Anne date. At right angles to this is the river front which consisted at first of the central block only. Two wings were added afterwards, and all this part of the house has a very modern appearance. When we go inside, however, the thickness of the now interior walls tells us that the modern addition is but a shell built over

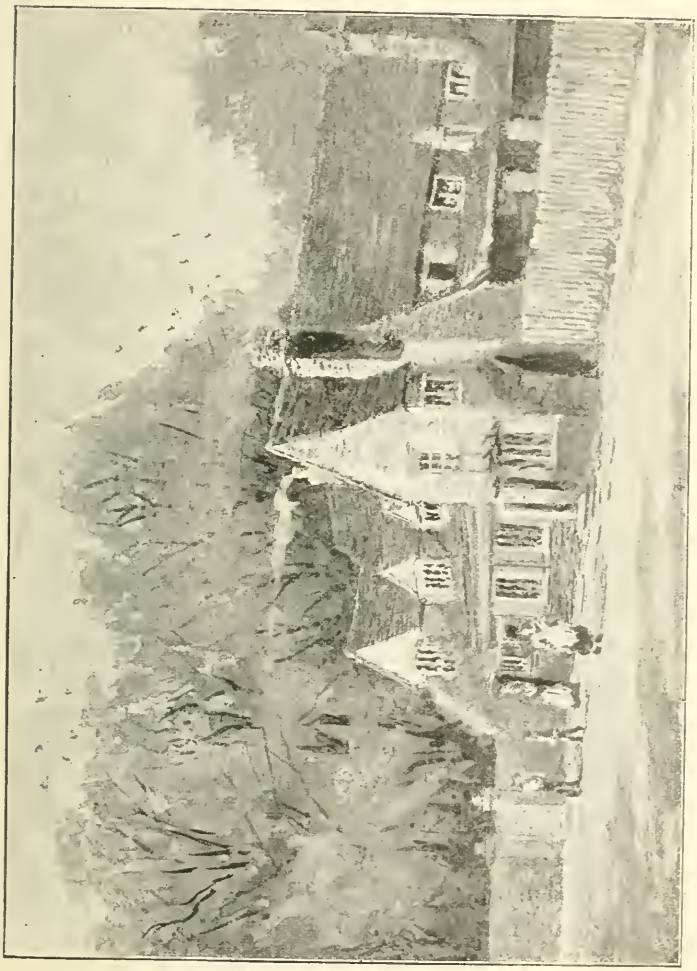
more ancient work. In one of these walls there is a secret hiding-place, which is approached through the floor of an upstairs-room.

A very famous person is said to have been hidden at Denham Court, though not perhaps actually in this room. Charles II. came here, we are told, in his wanderings after Worcester fight—where, indeed, did he not wander if all traditions be true?—and was concealed by Lady Bowyer. In the drawing-room is a set of pictures, let into panels over the doors, which commemorate the adventures of the merry monarch at this particular crisis of his life. One of these shows us the King disguised as a scullion in the kitchen. Another represents a panel behind which he is supposed to be concealed. A bleeding turkey has been hung over it for the purpose of throwing the bloodhound, who has been tracking the King, off his scent. A third represents Charles as no longer daring to remain in the house, but hiding amongst the rushes in a pond. Over the chimney-piece is a portrait of Lady Bowyer herself. The pictures are of no great value from an artistic point of view; for instance, the head of the bloodhound in the sliding panel scene is more like that of an Italian greyhound. Paintings of this character representing incidents in the escape of the young

king were frequently executed after the Restoration.

We shall not fail to notice the beautiful grounds, along one side of which sweeps the broad and shallow but, just here, quickly flowing Coln, for they have been immortalized by Dryden, who was frequently a visitor here as the guest of Sir William Bowyer. Under the great cedar-tree in front of the house he is said to have found his favourite seat, and here, at the close of his life, he finished his translation of the first Georgic and part of the last Æneid. He describes the grounds as a place where "nature has conspired with art to make the garden one of the most delicious spots in England." Outside the gardens are some fish stews and ponds, one of which may have been the hiding-place of Charles. Other visitors at the Court besides Charles II. and *Glorious John* have been Dr. Johnson, Sir Humphrey Davy, who came for an occasional day's fishing, and George IV.

Let us now retrace our steps through the village street—in any part of which an artist might sit down with a picturesque bit of cottage architecture before him—and make for the mansion situated to the west, Denham Place. This house, happily, has not been altered in any way, but remains just as it was



Old Houses at Park Gate, Denham.

when first turned out from the hands of its builder. The latter was not, however, one of the Peckhams, but their successor in the estates, Sir Roger Hill. Sir Roger began his mansion in 1670, and finished it in 1701. The cost of it, as we may see by his accounts which have been carefully preserved in the house itself, was £5,519 16s. 9d. The old house of the Peckhams seems to have been pulled down entirely, and the present large square building rests on an excellent underwork or crypt with a vaulted roof. Though the house stands somewhat low, this basement or cellar is never flooded, and the rooms above are therefore at all times perfectly dry. Another architectural feature which we shall notice is the deep overhanging cornice which runs all round the exterior walls.

The interior is full of tapestry and family portraits, and the most interesting apartment is a small private chapel. The screen, seats, and other fittings of the chapel, which are painted and gilt, are evidently of earlier date than the house. In fact, they are ecclesiastical work of the sixteenth century, and are said to have been brought from a chapel in the old house at Bulstrode. The chapel window is filled with family arms. *The Place* soon passed away from the family of Hill. Sir Roger's

grand-daughter, Abigail Lockey, a widow, married, as a second husband, Lewis Way, the ancestor of the present owner, and was herself his third wife. The portraits are to be found in nearly all the rooms. In the ante-room to the library, where there are beautiful oak panels, hangs that of Sir Roger Hill. In the library itself, which is also oak-panelled, is that of Lewis Way and his family. Abigail, the heiress, who brought him Denham Place, is in the dining-room. The billiard-room has a remarkable frieze. It represents a landscape and buildings, such as those which Dutch painters of the seventeenth century frequently introduced into their pictures, executed in plaster-work in high relief and coloured. Through the park runs the Misbourn, the upper portion of which we visited at Chalfont.

And now we have finished our wanderings up and down the famed Hundreds of the Chilterns. We have walked across the chalk downs, and have strolled along the banks of the Thames and the Coln. We have stood beneath the shade of the beech woods, and we have followed many a country lane and foot-path. We have in short tried to see every part of this most interesting southern portion

of the county of Buckingham. No church nor monastic house, no mansion nor college has, we trust, escaped our notice, if it was worthy of it from its beauty, its antiquity, or its associations. We have tried to catch glimpses, as it were, of men and women not unknown to fame and history, who have been in any way connected with the places which we have visited. Let us conclude our attempt to make this attractive little bit of our country still better known than it is, by quoting once more from the letters of the poet who has made the quiet little village, which forms nearly the centre of our district, world-known by his "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard." "The drift of my present studies," writes Thomas Gray, "is to know, wherever I am, what lies within reach that may be worth seeing, whether it be building, ruin, park, garden, prospect, picture, or monument; to whom it does or has belonged, and what has been the characteristic and taste of different ages. You will say this is the object of all antiquaries; but pray what antiquary ever saw these objects in the same light, or desired to know them for a like reason?" Conscious of many imperfections, though we have done our very best to make this sketch of the Chiltern Hundreds attractive and trustworthy, we dare

not add as applicable to our own efforts the words which follow: "In short, say what you please, I am persuaded whenever my list is finished you will approve it, and think it of no small use."—*Letter to Dr. Wharton, February* 21*st*, 1758.

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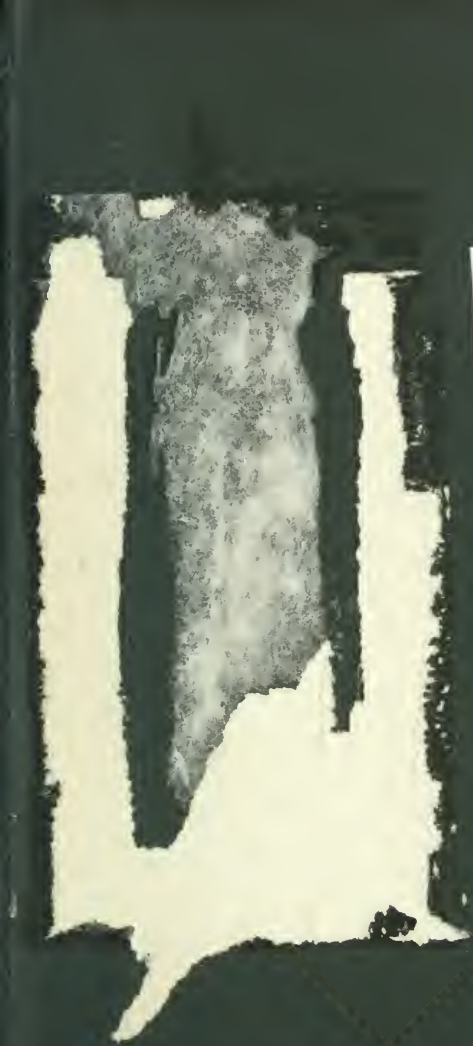

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